THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
STUDIES IN SACRED THEOLOGY
(SECOND SERIES)
No. 188

THE ECCLESIAL REALITY OF THE SEPARATED COMMUNITIES OF THE WEST

An Analysis of the Development in Ecclesiology from Mystici Corporis to Vatican II

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of the School of Sacred Theology
of the Catholic University of America in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology

by

Rev. James O'Owen McGovern, S.T.L.
Diocese of Camden

Washington, D. C.
1967

This dissertation was approved by the Reverend Robert E. Hunt as director and by Reverend John C. Selner and Reverend Ronan Hoffman as readers.

Nihil obstat:

Reverend Robert E. Hunt, S.T.D.
Censor Deputatus

Imprimatur:

+Celestine J. Damiano
Archbishop-Bishop of Camden

May 26, 1967

The nihil obstat and imprimatur are official declarations that a book or pamphlet is free of doctrinal or moral error. No implication is contained therein that those who have granted the nihil obstat and the imprimatur agree with the content, opinions, or statements expressed.

© Copyright by

Rev. James O'Ower McGovern

1968

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer would like to express his thanks to the Most Reverend Celestine J. Damiano, Archbishop-Bishop of Camden for allowing him to pursue graduate studies at the Catholic University of America. He is deeply grateful to Sr. Mary Francis, Phd. for proof reading the text and making many valuable suggestions. The writer is at a loss to adequately express his appreciation to the Reverend Robert E. Hunt who suggested the topic for this thesis and directed it to its completion. Whatever success may have been achieved herein the writer attributes to his wise direction and constant encouragement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS iv

INTRODUCTION ix

Chapter

I. THE STATUS OF ECCLESIOLOGY IN THE ERA OF *MYSTICI CORPORIS* 1

A. Polemic Nature of Ecclesiology Prior to *Mystici Corporis*

1. Counter Reformation Ecclesiology
2. Ecclesiology in the Nineteenth Century

B. The Teaching of *Mystici Corporis* on the Church and Separated Christians

1. The Description of the Church
2. The Role of Christ and the Holy Spirit in the Invisible Church
3. Who Belong to the Church
4. Summary of Encyclical's Teaching on Church

C. Interpretation of *Mystici Corporis* Regarding the Separated Christians

1. Theologians Favoring Membership for Separated Christians
2. Theological Opinion Opposed to Membership
3. Conclusions of Theologians Concerning Teaching on Membership

D. *Mystici Corporis* As A Catalyst For Future Development Regarding The Separated Christians And Their Communities

Summary

Chapter Page

II. FROM SEPARATED CHRISTIANS TO SEPARATED COMMUNITIES . . 32

A. Renewed Interest in Separated Christian After *Mystici Corporis*

B. Development Among the Theologians

1. The Development of the People of God Theology

a) People of God Theology as Reaction to *Mystici Corporis*
b) People of God Theology as Compatible with *Mystici Corporis*
c) People of God Theology: Its Significance for Ecumenism

2. Documents of the Magisterium

a) *De motione oecumenica*
b) *Suprema haec sacra*
c) Summary

3. The Ecumenical Movement

a) Congar
b) Thils
c) Baum
d) Bea
e) Toronto Statement by Central Committee of World Council

4. A Change in Theological Method

Summary

III. THE ECCLESIAL REALITY OF THE SEPARATED COMMUNITIES ACCORDING TO CATHOLIC THEOLOGIANS 80

A. General Comments on the Separated Communities

1. Jerome Hamer
2. Charles Journet
3. C. J. Dumont
4. M. J. LeGuillou

Summary

Chapter Page

B. Theological Approaches to the Ecclesial Reality of the Separated Communities

1. Yves Congar

a) The Status of the Separated Christian in Relation to the Church
b) The Status of the Separated Community in Relation to the Church

2. Gustave Thils

a) Elements of the Church as Theological Basis for Ecclesial Reality
b) The Relation of the Elements to the Notes of the Church

3. Jacques Gribomont

4. Thomas Sartory

a) Vestigia Ecclesiae

(1) Jesus Christ
(2) Action of the Holy Spirit
(3) Baptism
(4) The Word of God

b) Ecclesial Reality of the Separated Communities

5. Gregory Baum

a) The Magisterium as Basis for Ecclesial Reality

(1) Christian Patrimony of an Ecclesial Nature
(2) Separated Communities Approximate Church through Christian Patrimony

b) Theology of Local Church as a Basis for Ecclesial Reality

6. Walter Kasper

7. Heinrich Fries

Summary

Chapter Page

IV. VATICAN II AND THE QUESTION OF THE CHURCHLINESS OF THE SEPARATED COMMUNITIES OF THE WEST . . . . . .

A. Exposition of Matter in Decrees

1. Constitution on the Church
2. Decree on Ecumenism

a) Status of the Separated Christian
b) Status of the Separated Communities
c) General Observations

B. Commentators on the Council Documents

1. Bea
2. Jaeger
3. Thils
4. Baum
5. Leeming
6. Conclusion

Summary

V. CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES 173

A. Conclusions

B. Perspectives

BIBLIOGRAPHY 183

List of Abbreviations
Sources

INTRODUCTION

An apologetic-polemic method dominated our ecclesiology until recently. Nevertheless, certain efforts were made all along to understand the total phenomenon of Christianity as it exists in a state of separation, i. e., to suggest a theology of the Church not as a contradiction of the separated Christian communities, but as an all-embracing accounting for them. The encyclical Mystici Corporis Christi clarified one tendency by insisting on the harmony of the visible and invisible dimensions of the Church, and their co-extension with each other. This encyclical of Pope Pius XII thus marked the end of one period of ecclesiological endeavor along these lines, and at the same time served as a catalyst for Catholic specialists to come to grips with the problem of the relative ecclesial status of non-Roman communions.

That there has been a development in this area is attested by the Second Vatican Council's acknowledgment of separated Christian communities as such in a true ecclesial sense, whereas previously the magisterial views seemed exclusively to acknowledge individual separati only.

Since the encyclical Mystici Corporis Christi a relatively small but articulate group of Catholic theologians (primarily European) have

concentrated on identifying the ecclesial nature of separated Christian communities according to the "vestiges" of the Church of Christ discernible in them, and on constructing, tentatively at least, an ecumenical ecclesiology which incorporates these fresh perspectives. However, there exists no consensus as yet as to what should be the theological basis upon which "ecclesial reality" or "churchliness" can be predicated from the authentic Roman Catholic standpoint. Also, there does not seem to be a clear description of the dogmatic condition of these separated communities. Yet, as pointed out time and again by leading Protestant spokesmen, this problem is a key to any further dialogue towards unity. Thus Albert C. Outler makes the following comment.

> Nothing less than the community of faith provides an intelligible or justifiable forum for doctrinal dialogue. Nothing less than a mutual recognition of each other as members of such a community of faith can make a dialogue truly ecumenical.[1]

The importance of this question for ecumenism cannot be overestimated. In fact one of the constitutive principles upon which the World Council of Churches is based is the need to recognize in other Churches elements of the true Church. This is clear from the following statement of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches.

---

[1]A. C. Outler, "From Disputation to Dialogue," The Ecumenical Review 16 (1963), 20.

> They consider that this mutual recognition obliges them to enter into a serious conversation with each other in the hope that these elements of truth will lead to the recognition of the full truth and to unity based on the full truth.[2]

The ecumenical dialogue demands that we recognize the genuine Christian elements present in the separated communities.

There is a distinct need today for a careful analysis of the problem, its placement by the various Catholic theologians who have ventured into this delicate area, the development since Mystici Corporis, the acquisitions of contemporary Catholic thought, the contribution of the Second Vatican Council, and the possible directions of the future.

The purpose of this paper, then, is to examine the writings of those Catholic theologians who have engaged in the field of ecumenism and have contributed to the present day understanding of the separated communities. In particular we want to account for the ecclesiological development between Mystici Corporis and the Second Vatican Council and analyze the theological basis offered by these theologians for the ecclesial reality of the separated community. The documents of the magisterium relevant to this question, particularly the Constitutio Dogmatica de Ecclesia and the Decretum de Oecumenismo, will be examined in order to see how they have contributed to and furthered the development made by the theologians.

---

[2]L. Vischer, ed., A Documentary History of the Faith and Order Movement 1927-1963, 174.

The research has disclosed that those men most responsible for the ecclesiological study of the separated Christians since Mystici Corporis were theologians of northern European nationality. The author has read widely the writings of French, German, Belgian, Italian, and Spanish ecumenical theologians. The theologians studied in this paper are considered to be the major contributors to this question. Many theologians have been omitted from this study since the research has disclosed that their evaluation of this question was strictly of a derivative nature. To the best of the author's knowledge no theologian has been omitted who has made any original contribution.

The study of the separated communities has been limited to those Christian communities of the West which took their origin in the Reformation including those groups which have developed since that time. No individual community is isolated in this study. It is rather a global study of the separated communities of the West whose common denominator is the acceptance of baptism and the recognition of Jesus Christ as God and Savior. The question of the Eastern separated Churches is not considered here since the problem must be placed in different terms when treating of their ecclesial nature. Moreover, there seems to be little doubt if any regarding their reality as Church.

The common concern of all the theologians treated in this paper is that Catholic ecclesiology arrive at a better understanding of the separated communities. It will be noted that they are referred to in

many instances as ecumenical theologians. The word ecumenical indicates that they are engaged in a particular field of study which seeks to apply the data of revelation to a special problem--the relative status of the separated community. They echo the sentiments of Pope John XXIII expressed in his encyclical Ad Petri Cathedram "Permit that in our fatherly and loving heart we cherish the hope for your return . . . observe we beg of you, that when we lovingly invite you to the unity of the Church, we are inviting you not to the house of a stranger, but to your own, your Father's house. It belongs to you all."[3]

---

[3]Pope John XXIII, Ad Petri Cathedram, AAS 51 (1959), 497.

CHAPTER I

THE STATUS OF ECCLESIOLOGY IN THE ERA OF MYSTICI CORPORIS

A. Polemic Nature of Ecclesiology Prior to Mystici Corporis

A discussion of the question of the ecclesial status of the separated communities of the West presupposes a basic understanding of the nature of the Church tolerant of such a question. That such a consideration became possible only after the publication of the encyclical Mystici Corporis Christi will be the subject of this chapter. Even a cursory glance at the development of Catholic ecclesiology since the time of the Reformation makes it clear why such a question could not have been justly treated until the present century. Nevertheless, the efforts of the theologians from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, while not without significance for their insights into the nature of the Church, made little progress toward an understanding of the communions which broke with Rome.

1. Counter Reformation Ecclesiology

The fact is that the dialectic of Counter Reformation theology, regarding the separated communities, was not concerned with any

intrinsic value that the reformers' position might have.[1] The sole aim of Catholic theologians was to construct a bulwark of defense against the attacks of the reformers. What prompted the error of the latter made little difference; the task at hand was to refute it. Consequently, the ferocity and passion of the controversy led to an ecclesiology which was extremely apologetic and polemic in nature. Since the reform was quick to deny all mediation of the sacraments, priesthood, and Roman primacy, Catholic ecclesiology was forced to present an apologetical demonstration of the visible Church placing in relief its institutional structure. Chief among the theologians presenting such a view was Robert Bellarmine.[2] This emphasis on the visible aspect of the Church developed, then, not from a theology which sought to understand the nature of the Church as Church, but rather from an apologetic need to answer the reformers. All efforts were expanded to expose the visible, institutional Roman Catholic Church as identical with the one founded by Christ. For better or for worse the Church thus conceived has dominated Catholic ecclesiology down to the present century.[3]

---

[1]Thils notes that some recognition was given to the Communities arising from the Reformation, at least in a negative fashion. This is seen as regards the notes of the Church. It was allowed that some negative notes (elements not necessary for the constitutive nature of the Church) could exist among the separated communities. CF. G. Thils, Les notes de l'Église dans l'apologetique catholique depuis la réforme, 99.

[2]Bellarmine presents his view of the Church in response to the many heretical positions of the reformers. Cf. R. Bellarmine, De controversiis Christianae fidei adversus nostri temporis haereticos 2.3 (137-38).

[3]The influence of post-Reformation apologetics on the development of ecclesiology is brought out by Stanislas Jaki. Cf. S. Jaki, Les Tendances Nouvelles De L'Ecclesiologie, 9.

It would be an exaggeration to say that no emphasis was given to the internal aspect of the Church for a few of its representatives did manage to soar to glorious heights in theologizing on the Church. At the same time, spurred on by the Reformation, most of the manuals De Ecclesia followed the traditional position taken by the Counter Reformers. They were above all apologetic and developed for the most part the exterior, hierarchical, and sociological aspects of the Church, with some notes given to the mystery of the Church. With few exceptions this condition of the tracts De Ecclesia has continued up until recent years. As a result of this one-sided stress of the visible Church, theologians neglected the mystery of the Church in relation to the life of its members. Consequently an ecclesiology that could consider the positive values of the separated communities failed to develop.

That Catholic theology in its reaction to the Reformation should have taken such a stand is not surprising for heresy has always exposed theology to this danger. The main concern is ever the refutation of error. Little is done to develop a correct expression of the error in order to bring about the desired reform that originally occasioned the heresy. As we have seen, this tendency of theologians when confronted with heresy, has been particularly true in their reaction to the doctrine of the Reformers. While Protestantism denied the visible and human elements in the Church, Catholicism stressed its hierarchical,

visible structure. Thus, consistently attention was given to the visible Church rather than to the organism of the mystical Body.[4]

2. Ecclesiology in the Nineteenth Century

The first break through of any lasting consequence from this apologetic stance of ecclesiology toward a more balanced view of the Church was made in the nineteenth century with the theology of Johann Adam Moehler. This 'new theology' with its fresh insights into the mystery of the Church initiated the beginnings of an ecclesiology that was to overcome the Counter Reformation concept of the Church with its narrow insistence on the juridical, hierarchical, and organizational Church. A rediscovery of the inner, spiritual, organic, and sacramental structure of the Church as a community resulted.[5]

Moehler, then, brought to light the interior aspect of the Church. But at first only insofar as this had relation to the life of the Church as experienced by the individual. Only later in his works Unity in the Church and Symbolism does he recognize the importance of the idea of the mystical Body as expressing the unity of Christ with His members, the Church.[6] It has been pointed out that Hegel's organic

---

[4]The effect of heresy on the development of theology is treated at length by Congar. Cf. Y. Congar, Chrétiens Desunis, English tr. Divided Christendom, 24-33.

[5]Hamer discusses the influence of Moehler on contemporary ecclesiology. Cf. J. Hamer, The Church Is A Communion, 14-15.

[6]In his work Unity in the Church Moehler speaks of the Holy Spirit as the primary source of unity in the Church. Cf. J. Moehler, Die Einheit in der Kirche, 178-79. In Symbolism, however, the emphasis shifts for here Moehler concentrates on Christ as head of the mystical Body and source of unity among its members. Cf. J. Moehler, Symbolik, 389.

notion of the state, as a unit in which all the members work toward the betterment of the whole, influenced the German professor in conceiving of the Church as a union of members united in the love of the Spirit.[7] As a professor of Church History, he found proof for such a view of the Church's unity in the teaching of the early Fathers.

While Moehler was certainly a pioneer in what has been termed mystical body theology, another German, M. J. Scheeben, was not without influence in this new study of the Church. It was Scheeben, among the theologians of the nineteenth century, who deepened the mystical aspect of the Church.[8] He concentrated solely on the oneness of Christ and the Church and, consequently, the union this produces between the members and Christ.[9]

This development of mystical body theology was not confined to Germany, however, a similar trend, while not completely independent of the study in Germany, nor totally parallel to it, was taking place among the theologians at Rome.[10] There, through the work of Carlo

---

For an excellent review of Moehler's ecclesiology and a bibliography on the subject, cf. P. Riga, "The Ecclesiology of Johann Adam Moehler," TS 22 (1961), 563-87.

[7]Kevin McNamara brings out this point in an article which studies the development of ecclesiology in the present century. Cf. K. McNamara, "The Idea of the Church," ITQ 33 (1966), 102.

[8]For his doctrine on the Church the following may be consulted. Cf. M. Scheeben, The Mysteries of Christianity, 539-92.

[9]Jaki discusses the influence of Scheeben on mystical Body theology. Cf. S. Jaki, op. cit., 208.

[10]Hamer traces the new trends in ecclesiology beginning with Moehler in Germany, and ending in Rome. Cf. J. Hamer, op. cit., 15.

Passaglia[11] and his disciple, Schrader,[12] the theology of the mystical Body became the chief notion in the renewal of ecclesiology. Passaglia, like Moehler, attached himself to the witness of the Sacred Scriptures and to the Fathers where he saw the Pauline metaphor as the most profound definition of the Church. The definition given by him emphasizes above all the supernatural membership in the Church of Christ with respect to its Founder, Savior, and Head.

The extent to which the theology of the mystical Body occupied the thought of theologians in the nineteenth century can be seen from the fact that the first chapter of the schema Constitutio dogmatica de Ecclesia Christi presented to the Fathers of the First Vatican Council begins with the words: "The Church is the mystical body of Christ."[13] While this description of the Church found its way into the schema, there was not unanimous agreement among the Fathers regarding its fitness to describe the Church. The Fathers at the Council and theologians in general, who opposed the description of the Church as the mystical Body of Christ, did so on the grounds that it was too metaphorical. While some felt it was too vague to describe the visible

---

[11]Passaglia's work in the field of mystical Body theology can be found in his tract De Ecclesia. Cf. C. Passaglia, De Ecclesia Christi.

[12]Heribert Schauf edits a work in which he exposes the theses of Clemens Schrader on the Church as the mystical Body. Cf. H. Schauf, Die Ekklesiologie des Konzilstheologen Clemens Schrader, S. J.

[13]Mansi, Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio, 51, 539.

reality of the Church, others thought it too indefinite a term to have any real meaning for the Church as visible or invisible.[14]

In spite of the disagreement raised by this insistence on the interior aspect of the Church, it soon became evident that the Bellarmine definition which had dominated theological thought had begun to prove insufficient to express the true nature of the Church. It should be noted, nevertheless, that the dissatisfaction with the mystical body theology in the early part of this century was not based merely on an intransigent attachment to the traditional view of the Church as a visible, hierarchically constituted society. For during the period between the two Great Wars there was a tremendous revival in the study of the theology of the mystical Body. Two important contributions published at this time were: Le Corps mystique du Christ, by Emile Mersch,[15] and Corpus Christi Quod Est Ecclesia, by Sabastian Tromp.[16] However, some of the material dealing with the mystical Body threatened to discredit the advancements made in this area during the previous century. This was noticeably so among those theologians who practically

---

[14]Hamer discusses the attitude of the Fathers toward the use of the term mystical. Cf. J. Hamer, op. cit., 16.

[15]A synthesis of Mersch's study on the mystical Body was published posthumously. Cf. E. Mersch, The Theology of the Mystical Body, 479-520.

[16]Cf. S. Tromp, De Spiritu Sancto Anima Corporis Mystici, Series Theologica 1, and 7 which is a collection of the Greek and Latin Fathers respectively on this question. Corpus Christi Quod Est Ecclesia appeared in 1937, the second and third volumes De Christo Capite Mystici Corporis and De Spiritu Christi anima were published in 1960.

removed all necessity for a visible Church by their extreme emphasis on the interior bond of union between Christ and His members.

Mannes D. Koster, a German theologian, was very outspoken in his opposition to the mystical Body theology. One of the contentions of his work Ekklesiologie im Werden held that such theology had no theological basis for conceiving of the Church as a union of individuals.[17] The New Testament first presents the Church, then the individual. He further criticized this theology for its failure to refer to the Church's visible structure for he felt that the notion of the mystical Body could not help explain the doctrine of the Church, but only the doctrine of Christ, since it referred to union with Christ through grace and not union with the Church.[18] Unfavorable reaction in other parts of Germany denounced mystical Body theology as destructive of the Church's doctrine of grace and the necessity of man's cooperation with God. The criticisms leveled at this new study of the Church might have destroyed all of the positive insights it brought to the field of ecclesiology had it not been for Pope Pius XII and his encyclical Mystici Corporis Christi.[19]

B. The Teaching of Mystici Corporis on the Church and Separated Christians

It is necessary to examine the encyclical in order to understand

---

[17]Cf. M. Koster, Ekklesiologie im Werden, 150-151.

[18]Cf. ibid., 122.

[19]This the conclusion of Kevin McNamara, art. cit., 105.

its teaching on the nature of the Church. Particularly for this study it will be pertinent to see how it consolidated the gains of the mystical Body theology as developed in the nineteenth century. The main concern here with the encyclical is, of course, its relevance to the question of the ecclesial status of the separated communities of the West. Consequently, the encyclical's teaching on the Church regarding the following points will be considered:

a) the description of the Church,
b) the role of Christ and the Holy Spirit in the invisible Church,
c) who belong to the Church.

1. The Description of the Church

Pius XII confirms at the outset of the encyclical the appropriateness of the term 'mystical Body of Jesus Christ' to describe the Church.[20] The significance of this term for a proper understanding of the nature of the Church is the subject of the first three chapters. The Sacred Scriptures serve as a constant reminder that the Church is a body. Since it is a body, the Church is both one and undivided as well as visible and concrete. It is a grave denial of divine truth,

---

[20]"And so to describe this true Church of Christ--which is the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church--there is no name more noble, none more excellent, none more divine, than 'the mystical Body of Jesus Christ,' a name which blossoms like a flower from numerous passages of the Sacred Scriptures and the writings of the Fathers." Cf. Pius XII, The Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, 12. Pius XII, Mystici Corporis Christi, AAS 35 (1943), 193-248. Unless otherwise indicated, citations here will be to The Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, Catholic Truth Society, 1958.

then, to conceive of the Church as merely invisible. It is equally wrong to think that the Church is formed by an invisible bond which unites all Christian communities in spite of their differences in faith.[21] That this body which is the Church is the Body of Christ is shown from the fact that Christ is its Founder, Head, Upholder, and Savior.[22] In the section of the encyclical treating of the same Body of Christ, the Church, as mystical, the pope stresses the importance and value of the invisible nature of the Church. The word mystical, as applied to the Body of Christ, distinguishes the Church from the physical Body of Christ, and further, is indicative of the Church's preeminence over any natural body, physical or moral. The same word mystical also points to the unique nature of the Church as an invisible body.[23] The Church, then, while perfect as a society because of the divine visible means given it by Christ, is not constituted as a unique and preeminent society from its visible nature alone. Rather, the Church, as an invisible body by reason of the supernatural life shared among its members and He sho sustains this life, is on a

---

[21] Loc. cit.

[22] Cf. Pius XII, op. cit., 17-36.

[23] "The true meaning of the word 'mystical' therefore reminds us that the Church which must be held to be a society perfect in its own order, does not consist merely of social and juridical elements nor rest solely on such grounds." Pius XII, op. cit., 38.

level of supernatural existence far superior to that of the visible Church.[24]

2. The Role of Christ and the Holy Spirit in the Invisible Church

To understand the sublime nature of the Church as invisible, the encyclical directs our attention to the intimate union of Christ and the Holy Spirit with its members.

Through His Incarnation and Redemption, Christ has made it possible for man created in His image to increase in the likeness of the Eternal Father. Thus, through the bestowal of sanctifying grace, the members of the Church are made partakers of the divine nature and so live on a plane of unique friendship with God.[25] Moreover, it is Christ who is the source both of the divine light through which men have their faith and the supernatural gifts through which they persevere in holiness.[26] The encyclical cites St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians to underscore the bond of unity existing among the members of the mystical Body by reason of the graces flowing from its

---

[24]"For although the juridical grounds upon which also the Church rests and is built have their origin in the divine constitution given her by Christ, and although they contribute to the achievement of her supernatural purpose, nevertheless that which raises the Christian society to a level utterly surpassing any order of nature is the Spirit of our Redeemer, the source of all graces, gifts, and miraculous powers perennially and intimately pervading the Church and acting in her." Loc. cit.

[25]Pius XII, op. cit., 28.

[26]Cf. ibid., 30.

invisible head, Jesus Christ.[27]

> If, now we carefully consider this divine principle of life and power given by Christ inasmuch as it constitutes the very well-spring of every created gift and grace, we shall easily understand that it is none other than the Paraclete, the Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and who in a special manner is called the 'Spirit of Christ' or the 'Spirit of the Son.'[28]

It is through the Holy Spirit that the life-giving grace of Christ is poured out upon His members; through the same Spirit we are made adopted sons of God. The encyclical also proclaims the Holy Spirit as the invisible principle of unity within the Church. The Spirit of Christ sustains both the unity of the members with each other and with their head, Jesus Christ. To Him also must be attributed the source of every salutary act performed in the mystical Body, for He is present in every member. The Holy Spirit, then since He is not only present but also the source of power in the Church and in all its members is called the soul of the Church.[29]

3. Who Belong to the Church

One final point in this study of the Church as presented in the encyclical remains to be seen, namely, the question of membership. While the pontiff extols that intimate bond of union, invisible except

---

[27]"It is thus that, deriving its power from the divine Redeemer, its Head and source, the whole body, being closely joined and knit together through every joint of the system according to the operation in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the building up of itself in charity." Ibid., 32.

[28]Cf. ibid., 34.

[29]Cf. ibid., 35.

to the eyes of faith, between Christ and those in the Church he, nevertheless, defines membership entirely in terms of the visible Roman Catholic Church. Three conditions must be fulfilled before one can be, in the words of the encyclical, a membrum reapse: (1) baptism by water, (2) profession of the true faith, (3) adherence to the visible Church which has not been severed whether voluntarily or by legitimate authority.[30] Without distinguishing between formal and informal heresy the pope states that "schism, heresy or apostacy are such of their very nature that they sever a man from the Body of the Church."[31] Accordingly the encyclical excludes everyone from reapse membership in the Church with the exception of Roman Catholics who fulfill the above requirements.

Since these are the conditions for membership, the following question arises more from the order of logic than from the sphere of ecumenism. What is the status of all those, Christian and non-Christian alike, who are not reapse members of the Church according to the teaching of the encyclical? This question takes on an even greater significance in light of the Church's traditional teaching extra ecclesiam nulla salus est.[32]

---

[30]"In Ecclesiae autem membris reapse ii soli annumerandi sunt, qui regenerationis lavacrum receperunt veramque fidem profitentur, neque a Corporis compage semet ipsos misere separarunt, vel ob gravissima admissa a legitima auctoritate seiuncti sunt." Pius XII, Mystici Corporis Christi, AAS 35 (1943), 203.

[31]Pius XII, The Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, 16.

[32]For an exposition of this doctrine cf. T. Zapelena, De Ecclesia Christi, 2, 323-28.

It should be noted from the beginning that the encyclical had no intention of giving a definitive statement on membership in the Church. Some formal definition of who belong to the Church is demanded from the very fact that the document is speaking of a visible society. However, the predominant concern of the encyclical is not who is a member of the Church, but rather what is the nature of the Church and the life of those who are its members.

In answer to the question posed above Pius XII explicitly teaches that those who do not enjoy the privileges of real membership are not cut off from all access to the Church as a means of salvation. The pope speaks of the universal love of Christ which embraces all men and calls them to salvation.[33] In urging the faithful to pray for those outside the fold, he distinguishes those who have not yet received the light from those who have not achieved security in the Church.[34] This would seem to afford a greater degree of attachment to Christ for those who are baptized outside the Church than for the unbeliever. Finally, and more explicitly, the pontiff in referring to separated Christians says that

> ". . . though they may be related to the mystical body of the Redeemer by some unconscious yearning and desire, yet they are deprived of those many great heavenly gifts and aids which can be enjoyed only in the Catholic Church.[35]

---

[33] Pius XII, op. cit., 58.

[34] Cf. ibid., 61.

[35] Loc. Cit.

The encyclical does not teach, then, that those who do not meet the conditions for real membership are removed entirely from Christ and denied all possibility of salvation.

4. Summary of Encyclical's Teaching on Church

From this consideration of the encyclical's teaching on the Church as the mystical Body of Christ and the role of Christ and the Holy Spirit in the Church, there emerges a balanced presentation of the Church under its visible and invisible aspects. Even considering the preeminence in the order of divine reality of the Church as invisible, it cannot be conceived as existing without reference to the concrete historical Church founded by Christ.

a) Thus the document renews the significance of the Church as invisible, a concept which was nearly lost in Counter Reformation theology.

b) At the same time it teaches the necessity and importance of the visible Church whose existence was threatened by the extremes of mystical Body theology.[36]

c) Further, the definition of membership in the Church as taught by the encyclical makes it clear that only those who meet its conditions enjoy the fullness of the divine life in Christ through His Spirit.

d) Yet, there is no doubt from the teaching that those who are not <u>membra reapse</u> can be ordered to the mystical Body in some way. As such they do share some union of grace with Christ.

---

[36]Cf. <u>ibid</u>., 39.

e) It was not the encyclical's intention to determine the relationship of these people to the Church. This problem has been left for the theologians.[37]

Whatever is said about the Holy Father's encyclical Mystici Corporis Christi--the critics have been more vociferous since Vatican II--its contributions to the field of ecclesiology must be acknowledged.

a) It provided the foundation and motivating force prompting fresh studies into the nature of the Church.

b) That the encyclical opened the Church to the demands of ecumenism can be seen from a study of the theologians who have commented on it.

It must be admitted, however, the encyclical has been a two-edged sword. Reminiscent of post-Reformation apologetics, it has been wielded by those who saw in its teaching a denial of any positive value outside the Roman Catholic Church. With greater fervor and more fruitful gains others have sought an appreciation of the condition of the separated Christians in view of the encyclical's teaching on membership in the Church.

The dilemma, created by the encyclical regarding the question of membership, stems from an equivocal treatment of those who are outside the visible bonds of the Church. On the one hand a man becomes a member of the Church by baptism and can be ordered to the Body of Christ by an unconscious desire, on the other hand heresy, schism, and apostasy by their very nature destroy the bonds of membership.

---

[37] Richard considers the question of membership an open one and discusses the concept of imperfect membership for the separated Christian. Cf. L. Richard, "Une these fondamentale de l'oecuménisme: le baptême, incorporation visible a l'Église," NRT 74 (1952), 489.

C. Interpretation of Mystici Corporis Regarding the Separated Christians

The first concern here will be a consideration of some of those theologians who, prompted by the encyclical, took a positive stand regarding the separated Christians. Secondly, a consideration of the broader impact the encyclical made in the area of ecclesiology will be given.

1. Theologians Favoring Membership for Separated Christians

The more common opinion regarding the encyclical's teaching on membership in the Church is that it did not wish to exclude the possibility of some other type of 'belonging'. Noted theologians, even prior to the encyclical, spoke of something less than a full membership in the Church.[38] It is generally agreed that the encyclical did not intend to take a stand among the diverse theological opinions on the question of membership. Thus A. Chavasse[39] and M. Nothomb[40] point to the word reapse as used by the encyclical as proof for such an interpretation. They demonstrate that reapse allows one to distinguish perfect membership from a partial but real membership. Morel has a

---

[38]Confer the following:
Franzelin, De Ecclesia Christi, 415.
d'Herbigny, Theologica de Ecclesia, 272.
Billot, De Ecclesia Christi, 332.
E. Mura, Le Corps Mystique du Christ, 364.
Y. Congar, op. cit., 223.

[39]A. Chavasse, "Ordonnes au corps mystique. . ." NRT 70 (1948), 697.

[40]Cf. M. Nothomb, "L'Église et le Corps mystique du Christ," Irenikon 25 (1952), 242.

different approach. He resolves the question, not within the framework of the conditions laid down for membership, but from the distinction between Christ and the Church. Thus, the Church is the body of Christ in an eminent sense. But in a properly simple sense, anyone who lives authentically the life of Christ by grace will be a member of the mystical Body without necessarily becoming a member of the Church.[41]

J. Gribomont, relying on Yves Congar's treatment of membership in his work Divided Christendom agrees that there can be degrees of belonging to the Church. However, he denies that such a scale of membership can be properly expressed according to the distinction between the body and soul of the Church. Such a dichotomy the encyclical refuses to admit. Gribomont, like Chavasse, points to the pope's refusal to settle the question of the separated Christian's rapport with the Church. All others are simply regarded as being ordered to the Body of Christ. If theologians would seek to determine the condition of those who are ordered to the Body of Christ, Gribomont would see in the ordination itself the requisites for some degree of membership. Such an ordination as described by the encyclical must surpass a mere predestination and so be founded on a union of grace and supernatural faith.[42] A membership of this kind while less than the full visible belonging of which

---

[41]Cf. V. Morel, "Le corps mystique du Christ et l'Église catholique romaine," NRT 70 (1948), 709.

[42]Gribomont's article is concerned primarily with the ecclesial reality of the separated communities of the East. He starts, however, from a consideration of individual membership according to the encyclical Mystici Corporis Christi. Cf. J. Gribomont, "Du sacrament de l'Église et de ses realisations imparfaites," Irenikon 22 (1949), 347.

the encyclical speaks, is not to be considered as union with the soul of the Church alone. For just as full visible membership is sustained by the inner reality of grace, so union with Christ through grace is completely intelligible only when referred to His visible Church.[43]

Baum, also, sees in the encyclical's teaching, reference to an incomplete membership. He concludes to a membership *in voto* for those who are ordered to the Church by an unconscious desire. It is not within man's power to establish a permanent relationship with God. The grace of God must, therefore, be the source of this ordination and so constitutive of a membership *in voto*.[44]

Canonist Morsdorf makes a distinction on the basis of Canon 87[45] between constitutional membership and operative membership which can be active or passive.[46] In this way he explains how everyone becomes a member of the Church through baptism (constitutional membership), but only those who fulfill the three conditions of the encyclical become *membra reapse* (operative membership actively conceived). This position of Morsdorf is explained and defended by Thomas Sartory against the objections of Karl Rahner.[47]

---

[43]Cf. *ibid*., 349-51.

[44]Cf. G. Baum, *That They May Be One*, 28-9.

[45]"Baptismate homo constituitur in Ecclesia Christi persona cum omnibus christianorum iuribus et officiis, nisi, ad jura quod attinet, obstet obex, ecclesiasticae communionis vinculum impediens, vel lata ab Ecclesia censura." Canon 87. *Codex Iuris Canonici*.

[46]K. Morsdorf, "Die Kirchengliedschaft im Lichte der kirchlichen Rechtsordnung," *Theologie und Seelsorge* 1 (1944), 116-28.

[47]Cf. T. Sartory, *The Ecumenical Movement And The Unity of The Church*, 145-9.

It is Rahner's opinion that Morsdorf's notion of constitutional membership resulting from baptism is an unwarranted interpretation of Canon 87. This canon, Rahner says, refers to the normal case of baptism within the Church and the rights conferred upon the individual. It does not intend to speak of the conditions of membership.[48] Moreover, baptism alone cannot constitute one a member of the Church for other conditions are necessary as well. Faith and ecclesial communion must be present. While the latter may be presumed when speaking of baptism, this is not always the case. According to Rahner the only necessarily concomitant effect of baptism is the sacramental character. The character itself does not determine membership but disposes one for it. Rahner's objection to the use of baptism as constitutive of membership is further compounded by the fact that membership for him can only mean full membership, while Church can only refer to the visible Church. Hence baptism cannot determine member or non-member since the nature of the visible Church requires more, namely unity of faith and law.[49]

Sartory argues that Canon 87 can be understood as establishing a claim for constitutional membership through baptism. There is no reasom to believe that the canon refers only to baptism in the Church. As for Rahner's claim that baptism alone does not suffice for membership,

---

[48]Cf. K. Rahner, "Membership Of The Church According To The Teaching Of Pius XII's Encyclical 'Mystici Corporis Christi,'" Theological Investigations, 2, 20.

[49]Cf. ibid., 22-4.

Sartory counters that subjection to the law of the Church resulting from baptism is indicative of some sort of membership. How one attempts to explain the status of the separated Christian in relation to the Church will depend on how one conceives the Church. The encyclical's teaching on membership is primarily concerned with the visible Church. For this reason one can only speak of a belonging in the Church, distinct from membership, for heretics, schismatics, and apostates. They cannot be considered members in terms of the Church as conceived by the encyclical.[50] However, Sartory notes that the encyclical does not exclusively stress the visible nature of the Church. The theological virtues increase the bond of unity far greater than the visible, juridical ties. The encyclical notes also the sublime nature of the unity joining the members of the mystical Body by reason of its source which is the Holy Spirit.

At this point Sartory goes beyond the canonical determination of the question by Morsdorf and follows the dogmatic considerations of Nothomb.[51] The Holy Spirit is the unifying principle of all members of the Body of Christ and the source of all grace in the Church. From this Sartory would agree with Nothomb that a man outside the Church, touched by the Holy Spirit, is only affected so through the Roman Catholic Church. Thus one would have to say, even according to the

---

[50]Cf. T. Sartory, op. cit., 146-49.

[51]Cf. D. Nothomb, art. cit., 226-48.

encyclical, that such a man is a true, though incomplete and invisible member of the Church. Granted this belonging is not a membership in the visible structure of the Church; it is an attachment to the visible Church as such. Since, as Sartory notes, this attachment does not fulfill the three conditions of the encyclical, it should be termed a partial invisible membership.[52]

Cardinal Bea in discussing the question of membership of the separated Christians would agree basically with the conclusions of the theologians treated above. He cites Mystici Corporis Christi, Mediator Dei, and Canon 87 for the magisterium's teaching on who are members of the Church. He says that it is clear that the Holy Father in his encyclical on the mystical Body intended heretics and schismatics in the formal sense.[53] He notes that Mystici Corporis Christi reserves full membership for Catholics alone, that is, members of the Roman Catholic Church. On this basis all others are denied membership. The encyclical states that the separated brethern are deprived of the enjoyment of many privileges and graces proper to members visibly united with the Catholic Church. But it does not completely deny them every mode of belonging to the Church and every influence of the grace of Christ. The Cardinal points to the encyclical Mediator Dei to show

---

[52]Cf. T. Sartory, op. cit., 150-53.

[53]"Present-day theology distinguishes between material heresy (adhering to what is objectively heresy without realizing that it is such) and formal heresy (obstinately adhering to an objective heresy out of malice)." Cf. K. Rahner and H. Vorgrimler, Theological Dictionary, 202.

that the separated Christians belong to the Church by virtue of their baptism.[54] Canon 87 states that the Christian is a subject and so in some way a member. Thus the belonging is based also on the jurisdiction which, in different cases, the Church exercises in their regard. For this reason the pope calls them brothers and asks them to return to their Father's House.[55] In this manner Cardinal Bea concludes that the separated Christians enjoy a fundamental, albeit not full, membership in the Church under the influence of the grace of Christ.[56]

2. Theological Opinion Opposed to Membership

It would be inaccurate to end the discussion of membership at this point as though there were no theologians who refused to grant membership to the separated Christians on the basis of the encyclical. There were, in fact, many who were of this opinion.[57] But as the

---

[54]Pius XII, Mediator Dei, AAS 39 (1947), 521. English translation Mediator Dei, NCWC 34.

[55]Pius XII, The Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, 61.

[56]Cf. A. Bea, "Il Cattolico Di Fronte Al Problema Dell'Unione Dei Cristiani," La Civiltá Cattolica, 112 (1961), 122-26.

[57]The following may be consulted:
K. Algermissen, "Aktuelle Mitgliedschaft in der Kirche und gnadenhafte Zugehorigheit zu ihr," Theologie und Glaube, 46 (1956), 260-75.
R. Brunet, "Les dissidents de bonne foi sont-ils membres de l'Eglise?" Analecta Gregorianum 68 (1954), 199-218.
J. Fenton, "Membership in the Church," AER 112 (1945), 287-305.
S. Tromp, "De Ecclesiae Membris," Divinitas 6 (1962), 481-92.
J. Vodopivec, "Membri in re ed appartenenza in voto alla Chiesa," Euntes Docete, 10 (1957), 65-104.
C. Extremeno, "La necessidad de la iglesia para salvarse," Studium 3 (1963), 31-86.
J. Coyne, "The Mystical Body and the Ecumenical Movement," CR 42 (1957), 343-55.

Second Vatican Council has granted a qualified membership to the separated Christians, it does not seem necessary to treat the contrary opinion at equal length. It will suffice to study the position of Karl Rahner whose thought is representative of those who were unwilling to grant membership.

Rahner admits that the question of belonging to a community can be expressed in various degrees. There is room here for a complete and less complete measure of belonging. With regard to membership in the Church, however, the same is not true. For here one is not free to determine one's own definition of Church or of member. It is necessary to begin with the magisterium's pronouncement. Rahner notes that this is not to deny that the word Church can have a wider meaning and has in fact in theology had wider connotations. But the Church has the right to determine the breadth of its definition and so, when one seeks the conditions of membership, it is understood to be according to the definition of the Church as laid down in the encyclical Mystici Corporis Christi.[58]

For Rahner membership in the Church as visible necessarily includes subjection to the Church's twofold power of jurisdiction and orders which constitute it as a visible society. Consequently, he argues that neither the encyclical nor the magisterium's teaching prior to it recognizes any distinction between formal and material heresy. Since it is a question of belonging to the visible Church, a heretic,

---

[58]Cf. K. Rahner, op. cit., 6.

formal or material, cannot be a member. Since membership in either case would destroy the constitutive principles of the visible structure of the Church.[59] In other words even the material heretic would not be subject at least to the power of orders. It is Rahner's opinion, then, that no one can be considered a member of the Church except a Roman Catholic who meets the three conditions for membership as taught by the encyclical. This is not to deny, he observes, the validity of baptism received by the separated Christians. In fact baptism along with other elements of the Christian patrimony shared by the separated brethern constitute for them a condition of belonging to the one Church of Christ.[60] This position of belonging while productive of salvation must not be construed in any way as equivalent to membership. For membership according to Rahner is a univocal term and hence does not admit of degrees.[61]

3. Conclusions of Theologians Concerning Teaching on Membership

a) It is clear from the encyclical and those theologians who have commented on its teaching regarding membership that the door has not been closed to the separated Christians.

b) Even Those who deny membership on the basis of the encyclical must admit that those outside the Church in good faith are somehow united to the Church through Christ.

---

[59] Cf. ibid., footnote 27, p. 29.

[60] Cf. ibid., 24-26.

[61] Cf. ibid., footnote 73, p. 55.

c) It is evident that the encyclical's treatment of membership in the Church attracted many theologians to a study of this question particularly in regard to the separated Christian.

d) The encyclical's teaching on the distinction between body and soul or the visible and invisible aspects of the Church had equally important implications for those theologians concerned with the separated Christians.

Congar in his book Lay People in the Church discusses the tension which this dual aspect of the Church as invisible and visible has created for theology.[62] The Church as invisible can be understood from the traditional meaning the Church has always attached to the word ekklesia, that is, the Church considered as made up of members called together in Christ. Thus understood the Church is men's fellowship with Christ and with one another in Christ. From this view of the interior aspect there is seen the full significance and reality of the Church as visible. For the historical, visible Church founded by Christ is the totality of means given by Him whereby this interior union is realized.[63] The complementary nature of these two aspects of the Church was fully understood in the early Church and even the Church of the New Testament. This perfect harmony of the visible and invisible realities for-

---

[62]Cf. Y. Congar, Lay People In The Church, 22-52. In this chapter Congar discusses the relationship between the Church as institution of salvation and means of salvation. He describes the different movements in the Church which through the course of its history have tended to disrupt the harmony that should exist between these two aspects of the Church.

[63]Cf. ibid., 22-24.

med a living synthesis in the tradition of the Church up until the late Middle Ages. At this time the Franciscan Spiritualists unduely basing themselves on St. Augustine began a onesided emphasis on the Church as invisible that was to culminate in the Reformation theology of a Church stripped of all institutional aspects.[64] The pendulum then swung to the extreme right when the theology of the Counter Reformation practically reduced the Church to a hierarchical institution. It has already been seen that the visible nature of the Church remained the dominant theme in ecclesiology until the present century.

D. Mystici Corporis As A Catalyst For Future Development Regarding The Separated Christians and Their Communities

Theologians who sought to solve the question regarding the salvation of the separated Christian often arrived at unsatisfactory solutions because of an ecclesiology which presented only one view of the Church. It was impossible that a baptized separated Christian could be considered as saved in the Church so construed as visible. For this reason the distinction between the soul and body of the Church was developed. The visible nature of the Church was thus safeguarded for salvation granted in the soul of the Church was considered distinct from the body. Among some theologians this view led to the extreme of an invisible Church completely independent of the Roman Catholic Church. The distinction between the soul and body of the Church had its source

---

[64] Cf. ibid., 31-36.

in Robert Ballarmine. Its inept application to the problem of salvation for the separated Christian, however, must be placed with later theologians.[65]

That theological development in the area of ecclesiology was hindered by this loss of perspective between the visible and invisible aspects of the Church is evident. Herein lies the great glory of the encyclical Mystici Corporis Christi.

a) This document has restored to theology the traditional understanding and harmony that existed between the Church as the visible means of salvation and as the community of grace. The significant point to note is that under both aspects the Church is the one Body of Christ.

b) This teaching of the encyclical thus overcame the dualistic view of the Church as soul and body. There can no longer be a question of one belonging to the soul of the Church without belonging to the body.[66]

c) The separated Christian by reason of his baptism is united to Christ through the grace of the Holy Spirit and so in some incomplete way is joined to the Church.

d) The encyclical teaches that the Church as the visible means of salvation is the source of all grace uniting men with Christ.[67]

---

[65]According to Jaki the resolution of the body-soul concept of the Church was one of the break throughs in contemporary ecclesiology. Cf. S. Jaki, op. cit., 239.

[66]Cf. B. Willems, "Who Belongs to the Church," Concilium 1 (1965), 64.

[67]Pius XII, op. cit., 39.

Summary

Consideration has been given here to three aspects of the encyclical's teaching regarding the Church: (1) definition of the Church, (2) the nature of the Church as visible and invisible, (3) the question of membership. The new insights, brought to the study of the nature of the Church in these areas, had a major influence on Catholic theologians engaged in ecumenical studies. The document's teaching on the invisible nature of the Church in particular prompted theologians to inquire more deeply into the positive values of the separated Christians and their communities.[68] Furthermore, the implications of the encyclical's teaching on the theology of the mystical Body with its emphasis on the union of Christ with His Church and its members with Christ must be regarded as the starting point for an ecclesial consideration of the separated communities.

In this respect for the first time since the Reformation recognition is given to the ecclesial nature of the union which Christ has with the individual.

The emphasis is no longer confined to the jurisdical and hierarchical aspects considered as a constitutive sign of the external reality of the Church. Rather the hierarchy is now seen in its relation to the members of the Church, and inasmuch as it solidifies the union of each member with Christ. Consequently, the door has been opened for a theological consideration of:

---

[68]Cf. T. Sartory, "The Contemporary Ecumenical Movement," American Benedictine Review, 10 (1959), 18.

a) the degree of membership of the individual outside the Roman Catholic Church,

b) the present day discussion of membership of the separated community as such.

Thus understood Mystici Corporis Christi can be seen as a catalyst for those theologians working in the Christian Unity Movement, for it gave to theology a basic understanding of the nature of the Church as the mystical Body of Christ without which further investigation into the status of the separated Christian would have been greatly retarded.

Cardinal Bea notes that a complete and thorough understanding of the nature of the Church had been sought since the Council of Trent. He refers to the significance of the problem for ecumenism and the major acquisition made toward its solution by the encyclical Mystici Corporis Christi, for this document did more than present a juridical view of the Church. It helped theology come to a realization of the Church as present and living in its members.[69] Other theologians have praised the encyclical for consolidating the gains of mystical Body theology and spurring development in the field of ecclesiology.[70]

Catholic theologians, who were involved in the Christian Unity Movement, were anxious to rid ecclesiology of the polemic air that had

---

[69] Cf. A. Bea, The Unity of Christians, 120, 146.

[70] The following may be consulted for an exposition of the favorable influence of Mystici Corporis on contemporary ecclesiology.
Cf. K. McNamara, art. cit., 106.
Cf. U. Valeske, Votum Ecclesiae, 221-24.

surrounded it since the Reformation. They realized that a more penetrating analysis of the mystery of the Church was needed to render less difficult the approach between the Catholic and separated churches. The encyclical Mystici Corporis Christi, while not concerned with ecumenism, offered to the theologian such a view. Ecclesiology was thus freed of its strictly apologetical nature. At the same time there was opened to the theologians an understanding of the Church which would permit a more fruitful study of the separated Christians and their communities. The question regarding the ecclesial status of the separated communities of the West could not now be dismissed a priori.

CHAPTER II

FROM SEPARATED CHRISTIANS TO SEPARATED COMMUNITIES

A. Renewed Interest In Separated Christian After Mystici Corporis

Often, more importance is attached to what a person does not say rather than to the words actually spoken. Evidently this was the case regarding the encyclical Mystici Corporis Christi. Theologians agree that the Holy Father did not intend to settle definitively the question of membership in the Church, nor did he consider it a subject of primary importance. The brief treatment given to this question by Mystici Corporis supports this view. Nevertheless the theological literature, especially prolific in the periodicals, dealing with the encyclical is overwhelmingly concerned with the question of membership. That comment on the teaching of the encyclical should have pursued this relatively minor point can be attributed to two factors. On the one hand the war-time publication of the encyclical delayed reaction until the late 1940's, and early 1950's, and so was concomitant with the increasing influence of the World Council of Churches. On the other hand documents of the magisterium, published subsequent to the encyclical, tended to further the attention of the theologian on the relation of the separated Christian to the Roman Catholic Church.

To survey the superabundant material which theologized on the question of membership as approached by Mystici Corporis is neither necessary nor within the scope of this thesis.[1] The important point to note, as indicated in the previous chapter, is that many theologians sought to determine the degree of membership, if any, of the separated Christian according to the teaching of Mystici Corporis.

The attitude of the Church toward the Ecumenical Movement during this same period is one of increased concern and interest. Already in 1937, Catholic observers in an unofficial capacity attended the conference of Faith and Order at Edinburgh which gave birth to the World Council of Churches. In 1945, the Unitas Association was founded in Rome to promote the cause of Christian Unity in response to the efforts made toward this goal, by non-Catholic ecumenists in the Ecumenical Movement.[2] The Catholic theologians involved in the Christian Unity

---

[1] An excellent review of this material can be found in a doctoral thesis written by John J. King, O.M.I., in 1960. While the thesis is concerned with the necessity of the Church for salvation, chapters nine and ten are given to a study of the commentaries on Mystici Corporis and the question of membership. At this period the question of the Church's necessity is discussed in terms of membership. See J. King, The Necessity of the Church for Salvation in Selected Theological Writings of the Past Century (Studies in Sacred Theology, 2nd Ser., 115.)

[2] B. Leeming, The Churches And The Church, 164-67. Here Leeming discusses the more favorable attitude of the Church toward the Ecumenical Movement. He indicates that the more explicit defining of goals within the World Council of Churches has been partly responsible for this change.

movement began to focus their attention on the theological problems of unity especially as articulated in the World Council of Churches. The dedication and devotion of great men to the work of spiritual rapproachement between the churches did much to hasten this confrontation of theologians with the dogmatic issues dividing Christianity.[3]

In addition to the periodicals published by the Unitas Association at Rome and its counter part in Germany, the Una Sancta Movement, several Catholic publications were founded at this time particularly in France, Belgium, and Germany to promote the cause of Christian Unity.[4] The chief concern of all these periodicals is to faithfully expose the doctrine of the Church's Unity without prejudice to the awakening understanding of the meaning of Church within the Ecumenical Movement.

Amidst this rising concern with the scandal of the division existing among the separated communities, it is hardly surprising that the Catholic ecumenical theologians directed their attention more and more to the separated Christian. Unanimous agreement on the theological basis for membership of the separated Christian, as well as the very question of membership itself, according to Mystici Corporis is not shared by the theologians. Nevertheless, in the decade following the encyclical the theologians who proclaimed some degree of membership

---

[3]G. Thils, "Pour Mieux Comprendre Les Manifestations Oecuménique," NRT 84 (1962), 5. Thils cites the need for a theology which will present a positive view of the separated brethren. He refers to the work of men like Abbe Courturier, Lord Halifax, and Abbe Beauduin who made the theologians aware of this need.

[4]The periodicals Vers l'Unite Chrétienne and Istina appear in France; Irenikon is published in Belgium.

are a majority. So strong was the consensus of opinion among the theologians engaged in dialogue with the separated Christians for favoring a qualified membership of the individual that they were soon led to study the separated community itself and its relation to the one Church. Several theologians attempted theories in which they sought to establish a theological basis for some ecclesial reality among these communities. It should be noted, however, that neither the question of membership of the separated Christian, nor the ecclesial reality of the separated Christian community was definitively settled by the theologians between Mystici Corporis and the Second Vatican Council.

In this chapter our purpose is to set forth the development which took place among the Catholic theologians, and thereby hope to account for the transition from the question of membership of the individual to that of the churchliness of the separated community. Comparing the words of Mystici Corporis which state regarding the separated Christians that ". . . they may be related to the mystical Body of the Redeemer by some unconscious yearning and desire . . ."[5] with the words of the decree De Oecumenismo from the Second Vatican Council concerning the same separated Christians, "for the Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them as means of salvation which derive their efficacy from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church,"[6] an evolution in the teaching of the magisterium is evident. It will

---

[5]Pius XII, Mystici Corporis Christi, AAS, 35 CTS, 61.

[6]Decretum de Oecumenismo, AAS (1965), 90. Citation here is to the Paulist Press edition, The Decree On Ecumenism, 51.

be of great significance to see how and to what degree Catholic theologians involved in ecumenical work anticipated this new development in the magisterium presented by the Second Vatican Council.

B. Development Among the Theologians

The theologian does not work in a vacuum, nor are the dogmas he interprets merely a catalogue of truths which only come to life when he directs his attention to them. Rather, the theologian labors in a living Church whose doctrine is reflected in the life of its people. In his study of the Church's magisterium, he cannot isolate its pronouncements from the members who live and are formed by them. Catholic theologians who were engaged in ecumenical dialogue were keenly aware that many of these truths were manifested in the lives of the separated Christians as well as their own brothers. The encyclical Mystici Corporis has already been referred to as one of the documents of the magisterium which fostered a favorable view of the separated Christians. With the teaching of Mystici Corporis as a foundation, this chapter will discuss four additional factors which aided the Catholic theologian in the field of ecumenism. They are as follows: (1) the development of the People of God theology; (2) additional documents of the Holy Office; (3) the Ecumenical Movement; (4) a change in theological method. It will be the contention of this chapter that these four factors are best suited to account for the transition among the ecumenical theologians from a consideration of the individual to the separated community outside the Church.

1. The Development of the People of God Theology

The reaction of the Dominican theologian Koster to the mystical Body theology, noted in chapter one, coincided with a revival in scriptural studies which focused its attention on the biblical notion of ekklesia. Theologians expecially in Germany received these studies with great enthusiasm, for they represented a marked contrast from the ecclesiology then prevalent whose foremost consideration centered on the visible, institutional structure of the Church. By a return to the sources exegetes were unveiling biblical concepts of the Church as congregation, assembly or community of people, special people, etc., seldom attended to since the Reformation.[7] To a certain extent the teaching of Mystici Corporis by identifying the mystical Body of Christ with the Roman Catholic Church tended to strengthen the traditional view of the Church conceived as a juridical institution. Hence the theology of the Church as the People of God initially was a parallel development to the teaching of Mystici Corporis. However, theologians soon began to see the idea of the Church as the People of God as compatible with and complementary to the Church understood as the mystical Body of Christ.

a) People of God Theology as Reaction to Mystici Corporis[8]

---

[7] We are not concerned here with the actual exegesis, but rather the significance it had for the Catholic theologian in dialogue with the separated Christian. For a bibliography of the exegetes who contributed most to the development of the study of the Church as the People of God, see Y. Congar, "The Church: The People of God," Concilium 1 (1965) 17, footnote 6.

[8] For the material in this section the writer follows the historical study of the development in ecclesiology after the encyclical Mystici Corporis made by Ulrich Valeske. Cf. U. Valeske, Votum Ecclesiae, 237-49.

Encouraged by the works of Koster and the exegetes referred to above, Catholic theologians pursued an understanding of the Church as the People of God rather than along the lines of the encyclical Mystici Corporis. The work of Canon Cerfaux succeeded in introducing a similar trend among the French theologians.[9] However, it was the German theologians who were most responsible for this new development. Typical of the reaction to the encyclical's metaphorical description of the Church was the objection raised by J. Eger in his doctoral dissertation on the Volkstheologie in Ambrose of Milan.[10] As a result of his study, he disapproves of the term body to describe the Church. Eger's thesis entitled Salus Gentium written in Munich in 1947, sets forth the term People of God as a more fitting description of the Church as a living institution. He sees the Church as a community of believers rather than an organism made up of living parts. He terms the definition of the Church as the mystical Body of Christ a heilsbiologische view, whereas a description of the Church should take into account the redemptive work of Christ committed to it and so embrace its heilsgeschichtliche aspect. Such a view of the Church is supported by the Benedictine, A. Shaut, in his critical study of the word Church in the liturgy and the Bible. Among the liturgical prayers he finds the words populus and plebs to be the most frequently used substantives to express the word

---

[9] L. Cerfaux, La théologie de l'Église suivant Saint Paul, Paris, 1942. The English version of this book, The Church in the Theology of St. Paul, was printed in Edinburgh, 1959.

[10] J. Eger, Salus gentium, 247.

Church. From the Sacred Scriptures he concludes that the word Church signifies the community of worship--Kultgemeinschaft.[11] The theologian, R. Grosche, is also of the opinion that the term body fails to express a notion of the Chruch consonant with the Sacred Scriptures.[12] He points out that the biblical mentality is historically oriented and so presents the Church in this way, whereas Western civilization, influenced by the Greek abstract mentality, developed a notion of the Church along the lines of a body. While this notion is not in itself abstract, it does represent an abstraction from the manner in which the New Testament presents the Church. Thus Grosche feels that the term People of God expresses better the historical continuity of the Church today with the Church founded by Christ.

b) People of God Theology as Compatible with Mystici Corporis[13]

By the end of the 1940's theologians were giving consideration to the Church as the People of God. The widespread study of this notion moved theologians to integrate this understanding of the Church with the concept of the Mystical Body. It was no longer a question of substitution as Koster had favored. The theologians saw in the People of

---

[11] A. Shaut, "Die Kirche als Volk Gottes," Benediktinische Monatsschrift 25 (1949), 195.

[12] R. Grosche, "Vom Bau der Kirche," Hochland 40 (1947-48), 273 ff.

[13] Two articles by Kevin McNamara offer a fine presentation of the material presented in this section. See K. McNamara, "The Idea of the Church," ITQ 33 (1966), 107-09, and "The Ecclesiological Movement in Germany in the Twentieth Century," IER 102 (1964), 352-58.

God theme a safeguard for the visible concept of the Church as explained in Mystici Corporis, for thus understood, there is restored to the Church the dignity and importance of its people. The role of the hierarchy is subordinated to its proper place as servant of the people, and this is in accord with the New Testament presentation of the matter. In this way the visible notion of the Church as taught by Mystici Corporis is balanced by the People of God concept. That is, the visibility of the Church is sought primarily in the assembled people of God--not in the Pope and the hierarchy. This does not deny the essential importance of the latter in the Church, but rather properly identifies the hierarchy as part of the visible structure.

Certainly, the rediscovery of the term People of God awakened many conceptions expressive of the Church's life which had rested undisturbed for centuries. As an ecclesiological category this appellation is less likely to overemphasize the juridical aspect of the Church. As a theme whose source is biblical, it expresses most aptly the historical continuity existing between the Old and New Testaments. It recalls both God's love, who calls His People to salvation, and the unity which exists among the People called to salvation. By itself, however, the People of God fails to indicate the ecclesial reality of the Church, for this call to salvation is centered in Jesus Christ, and the People of God receive their call through His Church. Any attempt at a definition of the Church, then, must be based on and refer

to Him who forms and sustains that Church. Many theologians recognized that the term People of God by itself lost sight of this essential form given to this people through the Incarnation.[14]

Thus Congar explains that the gifts promised to the people of the Old Testament are seen through the advent of Christ as nothing less than the goods of God Himself.[15] The true heritage of Israel is not the promised land but eternal life. Only one unique heir is able to have such a heritage; He is Christ. In Christ we have that inheritance, so we are co-heirs with Christ. Consequently, we become the People of God in the present economy only by becoming members of Christ, the well beloved Son. Congar further points out the need for reference to the

---

[14]This paper will confine itself to a study of those Catholic Ecumenical theologians who made use of the People of God theology as a bridge to the separated brethren. For a study of those theologians who developed the People of God theology in conformity with the Church understood as the mystical Body of Christ the following works may be consulted.

M. Schmaus, Katholische Dogmatik (3. 204-39).

I. Backes, "Die Kirche ist das Volk Gottes im Neuen Bund," Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift 69 (1960), 111-17.

O. Semmelroth, "Um die Einheit des Kirchenbegriffs," Fragen der Theologie heute, ed. J. Feiner et alii 321-23. Eng. tr. Theology Today, 131-34.

J. Ratzinger, Volk und Haus Gottes in Augustins Lehre von der Kirche, 327.

K. Algermissen, Konfessionskunde, 78ff.

L. Bouyer, "Où en est la théologie du Corps mystique?" RSR 22 (1948), 313 ff.

[15]Y. Congar, Sainte Eglise, "Peut-on definir l'Eglise?" (Unam Sanctam 41), Paris, 1964.

idea of the Church as the Body of Christ.[16] Only in this way can we explain the constitutive nature of the Church as essentially One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic. It is true that the Church as the People of God does not yet reflect in her life the perfection of these four notes. Thus understood the term People of God properly expresses the Church's longing for the Parousia, for only then will the life of the Church perfectly reflect the gifts Christ gave it. However, an understanding of the Church based solely on the People of God tends to obscure, if not omit, the divine reality possessed by the Church here and now because it is the Body of Christ. Thus Congar concludes that the unique form given to the People of God by Christ and His Holy Spirit can only be expressed in terms of the theology of the mystical Body.

c) People of God Theology: Its Significance for Ecumenism

Catholic theologians who entered the field of ecumenical theology were particularly concerned about a definition of the Church which stressed only the visible and juridical structure. The theology of the mystical Body, then, was a welcomed addition to Bellarmine's understanding of the Church for it gave explicit expression to the ecclesial

---

[16] Y. Congar, art. cit., 14-16. Congar discusses here the limitations of the term People of God to describe the Church. The same notion is treated at length in his book Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'Église, 79-80, 153 ff., 170.

Thomas Sartory discusses the eschatology implied in the People of God theology. He points out that the eschatological view of the Church among non-Catholic ecumenists does not embrace the institutional Church precisely because they do not relate the People of God to the Body of Christ. See T. Sartory, The Ecumenical Movement And The Unity of The Church, 128-36.

nature of Christ's union with the members of the Church. By itself, however, the mystical Body concept of the Church failed to express the linear notion of the Church as historically founded in time and progressing toward its final perfection in eternity. The Church, conceived as the people of God, illumined this dynamic aspect of the life of its members.

The need to underscore such an understanding of the Church impressed itself upon the theologians through their dialogue with separated Christians, for one of the major problems facing the Ecumenical Movement, especially since the formation of the World Council of Churches, was a conceptualization of the reality which the Church represents. The urgency of this problem and the necessity for its resolution was thrust upon the Protestant theologians by the interchange of different self-understandings among the member churches within the World Council. Any explanation of the church's reality would have to respect the position of the member churches. And so the idea of the Church as the people of God appealed to the separated brethren as well, for this notion of itself did not elicit any ontological concept of Church. It was, thus, consonant with the traditional Protestant understanding of the word church as the community of the saved rather than the institution of salvation. Consequently, Catholic ecumenists found in this notion of the Church as the People of God an avenue of approach to the separated community's emerging conception of themselves as church.

The Church so conceived presented more than just a rapport between the Catholic Church and the separated communities. Catholic ecumenists saw, mirrored in the collective life of these separated Christians, a People of God seeking perfection like themselves. But as a mirror only presents an image of reality and not the reality itself, so too the separated community as the People of God does not reflect all the reality which Christ gave to that People of God which is the Catholic Church.

This image of the Church as the People of God reveals a further understanding of the Church significant for the dialogue among the churches. Thus the idea of the People of God suggested an understanding of the Church as the Pilgrim People of God which is the dynamic conception of the Church marching through history referred to above. The addition of the word pilgrim endows the People of God concept of the Church with a significant nuance, for it reintroduces two 'new themes' which enrich ecclesiology, namely, the Incarnational and eschatological aspects of the Church.[17] It has been seen that the Church in its passage through history is prefigured by the Israelites passage from bondage to the Promised Land. Thus the eschatological notion of the kingdom, begun with the Incarnation but not yet fully arrived, suggests itself. It is, however, a dynamic eschatology as

---

[17] Y. Congar, art. cit., 10-11. Congar points to the renewed interest in eschatology as one of the most important re-discoveries of contemporary theology. He then proceeds to explain how the People of God theology espresses a sound eschatological understanding of the Church.

opposed to the static notion of the final glory characteristic of the eschatology in the tracts De Novissimis.

This is a Pilgrim People of God. Since the first Pentecost it has, not without continual conflict, progressively marched towards the Parousia. The Church is a redeemed people but not yet fully saved. Consequently, the parallel between the Pilgrim People of God and the Incarnation theme is evident. Christ takes on a human nature, identifies himself with men, suffers for us in the flesh for which He is received and rewarded by His Father as Lord. Similarly the Church, a divine institution, takes on a human form, walks and suffers in the flesh in union with Christ persevering in its pilgrimage until the Parousia.

The pilgrim notion of the Church makes it clear that the Church, always safeguarding the essential form Christ gave it, in different times and different cultures must of necessity adapt itself to a particular milieu. It further suggests the failings and imperfection which the Church is subject to because it transmits divine treasure through vessels of clay. The Church, then, in its members has not yet attained the fullness of perfection willed by Christ. Continually it seeks to renew itself so that the life of its members might one day reflect the fullness of Christ's gifts. One cannot say that this has been a failure on the part of the Church. The Incarnation, indeed, demands human elements in the Church which in turn demand gradual growth, occasional failure, and a limited perfection. What has been a failing in the

Church was the reluctance of theologians to admit this human condition. Emphasis was given to the essential perfection possessed by the Church inasmuch as it is the one and only institution founded by Christ possessing all the means necessary to achieve its goals. From such an understanding of the Church theologians could only view elements of the Christian life existing in the separated communities as severed remnants void of any value in themselves.

Herein lies the major contribution of the People of God theology to the field of ecumenism, for the new dimensions of the Church's life, unveiled by the Prilgrim People of God concept, gave Catholic ecumenists a theological basis for uncovering the positive values of the Christian elements living in the separated communities. At the same time this conception, grounded in an understanding of the Church as the mystical Body of Christ, preserves the institutional form and so safeguards its essential unity.

2. Documents of the Magisterium

In addition to the encyclical Mystici Corporis two documents of the magisterium encouraged Catholic ecumenical theologians to intensify their study of the Christian life of the separated brethren and their communities. These were the Instruction of the Holy Office De motione oecumenica[18] dated December 20, 1949, and the letter of the Holy Office

---

[18] AAS, 42, 142-47. An English translation of this document appeared in The Tablet of London, March 4, 1950. This translation can be found in B. Leeming, op. cit., 282-87.

to the then Archbishop Cushing of Boston, referred to as Suprema haec sacra,[19] dated August 8, 1949. The teaching of these two documents will be considered here in so far as they relate to the question of the ecclesial reality of the separated communities.

a) De motione oecumenica

The opening statement of the Instruction bears witness to the Church's concern for and encouragement of the work toward Christian Unity both within and outside the Roman Catholic Church. The Ecumenical Movement, in which non-Catholic Christians diligently seek to fulfill Christ's priestly prayer for unity, is given positive recognition. The document states that the work of these men is under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.[20] The Instruction then proceeds to cite seven norms which are to serve as guide lines for Catholics engaged in ecumenism. These are not entirely regulatory in scope, but reveal certain significant factors concerning the Church's attitude toward ecumenism.[21]

---

[19]The official translation of this letter along with its Latin text can be found in AER 127 (1952), 307-15. This letter was issued by the Holy Office in 1949 but was not made public until 1952. Thus it will be treated last.

[20]"Iam vero in pluribus Orbis partibus, quum ex variis externis eventibus et animorum mutationibus, tum maxime ex communibus fidelium orationibus, afflante quidem Spiritus Sancti gratia, in multorum animis ab Ecclesia Catholica dissidentium desiderium in dies excrevit ut ad unitatem omnium redeatur, qui in Christum Dominum credunt." AAS, 42, 142.

[21]Some ecumenists, Catholic as well as non-Catholic, have regarded the Instruction as unduly repressive. Father Leeming in a fine exposition of the document cites statements from the World Council of Churches which indicate that the regulations of the Instruction are no more demanding than those of the World Council toward its member churches. See B. Leeming, op. cit., 264-72.

Thus, while warning against many aberrations that have appeared, the Holy Office gives recognition to certain positive values existing among the separated brethren.[22] Further, while stating that ecclesiastical approval must be obtained for meetings at which Catholics and non-Catholics discuss matters of faith and morals, the document concedes the validity of their position as a partner in the dialogue.[23] Finally, the prevailing attitude of the document, while quite demure in comparison with present day statements of the magisterium, was received by the majority of Catholic ecumenists as official recognition of their ecumenical endeavors.

Gustave Thils made a survey of the numerous commentaries on the Instruction of the Holy Office. He observed that favorable remarks dominated even among the separated Christians. Worthy of note according to Thils' reading is the interest that the document seeks to generate among the clergy for responsible involvement in ecumenical studies.[24] The Instruction has even greater significance for theologians studying the condition of the separated brethren. Thils, one of the leading

---

[22]"Hii (separated Christians) quidem edoceantur se ad Ecclesiam redeuntes nihil esse perdituros eius boni, quod gratia Dei in ipsis hucusque est natum, sed per reditum id potius completum atque absolutum iri." AAS 42 (1950), 144.

[23]"Omnes praefatae collationes et conventus, publici et non publici, ampliores et minores, ex condicto instituti, ut pars catholica et acatholica discussionis causa de rebus fidei et morum tractet suaeque fidei doctrinam tamquam exponat, par cum pari agens, subsunt Ecclesiae praescriptis . . ." AAS 42 (1950), 145.

[24]See G. Thils, Histoire Doctrinale Du Mouvement Oecuménique, 298-300.

Catholic theologians in this field, takes great pain to examine the teaching of the magisterium. He is searching for a theological basis from which the elements of the Christian life, existing in the separated communities, might be properly evaluated. Beginning with Leo XIII he notes many instances where the pontiffs in their pronouncements cite examples of positive values existing among the separated brethren. De motione oecumenica, in effect, brings these citations into an ecumenical reference by attributing these good works to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.[25]

Thomas Sartory was equally optimistic in his appraisal of the Instruction.[26] One can only be encouraged from the document's implication that the desire for Christian unity at the heart of the Ecumenical Movement is inspired by the Holy Spirit. Of special interest also is the fact that non-Catholics taking part in inter-faith discussions speak as equals with their Catholic counterparts. From these two points in particular Sartory concludes that the Instruction

> ". . . is a clear and not at all negative directive on Ecumenical rapproachement, It has relieved Catholic ecumenical theologians from the pressure of uncertainty from which their work had frequently suffered. They now know that their labors are safe, and they are encouraged to seek for a mutual understanding on an unequivocal basis."[27]

---

[25] See G. Thils, art. cit., 3-4, 6.

[26] See T. Sartory, op. cit., 93-96.

[27] Ibid., 96.

It is interesting to note that Yves Congar wrote an article entitled "L'Appel Oecumenique Et L'Oeuvre Du Saint-Esprit" which was published about the same time as the Instruction of the Holy Office. He observes that the scandal of the division which is much more serious than we at times recognize, is lessened to a certain extent by the search for unity. Unbelievers realize that a value must be present where, despite divisions, these people seek unity. Like the Instruction, Congar states that this call to ecumenism is very much the work of the Holy Spirit. The first work of the Spirit in bringing the soul to conversion is to convince him of sin. Likewise in the work of ecumenism the Spirit is reminding us of sin--the sin of division.[28]

b) Suprema haec sacra

The Instruction De motione oecumenica must be described as a pastoral document directly concerned with and encouraging Catholic participation in the goals of the Ecumenical Movement. By contrast, the letter of the Holy Office to Archbishop Cushing, is primarily doctrinal in content. Because of its teaching, it became indirectly involved in ecumenical matters. The purpose of the letter was to settle a dispute regarding a controversy over the Church's teaching extra ecclesiam nulla salus. This doctrine was misinterpreted by a group of people associated with "St. Benedict's Center" in Boston, and Leonard Feeney of Boston

---

[28] Y. Congar, Chrétiens En Dialogue, "L'Appel Oecuménique Et L' Oeuvre Du Saint-Esprit," (Unam Sanctam 50. 72-76).

College. According to these people salvation was absolutely restricted to de facto members of the Roman Catholic Church.

In response the letter states that the Church has always taught extra ecclesiam nulla salus.[29] This teaching stems from the command of Christ to baptize and teach all nations. However, the interpretation of this dogma is not left to private judgment, it must be understood in the manner that the infallible magisterium teaches it.

God in His infinite mercy has not held man to just one manner of obtaining salvation. Thus the effects of those helps to salvation which can most readily be obtained in the Church, can also, under certain circumstances, be obtained when those helps are used only in 'desiring' and 'longing'. The Council of Trent teaches this regarding the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance, and this same teaching must be understood regarding the Church. "Therefore, that one may obtain eternal salvation, it is not always required that he be incorporated into the Church 'actually' (reapse) as a member, but it is necessary that at least he be united to her by 'desire' and 'longing'."[30]

This desire, moreover, need not be explicit. Thus for one in invincible ignorance an implicit desire will suffice. The implicit desire

---

[29]We will refer here only to the doctrinal portion of the letter in the periodical cited above. AER 127 (1952), 312-314.

[30]"Quandoquidem ut quis aeternam obtineat salutem, non semper exigitur ut reapse Ecclesiae tamquam membrum incorporetur, sed id saltem requiritur, ut eidem voto et desiderio adhaereat." Ibid., Latin 308, Eng. tr. 313.

would consist in the good faith of the individual whereby he conforms his will to the will of God. The letter states that this is the teaching of Pius XII in the encyclical Mystici Corporis where he distinguishes between being actually incorporated into the Church as a member and being united to the Church only by desire. The type of implicit desire needed for salvation is qualified. Not any implicit desire will suffice, the Holy Office states, but only an implicit desire animated by perfect charity. "Nor can an implicit desire produce its effect, unless a person has supernatural faith. . ."[31]

Prior to the publication of this letter, it was the common teaching of theologians that those outside the Church can attain salvation. However, some of the arguments employed ran the risk of destroying the necessity of the Church for salvation.[32] In effect they failed to show any connection between the saving grace of Christ received by the individual and the means established by Him as a source of this grace. Now for the Catholic ecumenical theologian this document was an important aid in determining the status of the separated Christians and their

---

[31]". . . nec v@tum implicitum effectum habere potest, nisi homo fidem habeat supernaturalem." Ibid., Latin 309, Eng. tr. 314.

[32]Monsignor Fenton explains the unique doctrinal importance of this letter. It is his claim that it is the most precise formulation to date of the magisterium's teaching "extra ecclesiam nulla salus." Contrary to the opinion of recent theologians, the letter clearly states that the Church is necessary for salvation by way of means as well as precept. See J. Fenton, "The Holy Office Letter on the Necessity of the Catholic Church," AER 127 (1952), 455-56.

communities since it confirmed the speculation of these theologians following Mystici Corporis that baptized non-Catholics belong in some way to the Church. It clearly states that those who are not actual members of the Church, nevertheless, are saved by means of the Church. This statement obviously includes the infidel as well as the separated Christian. Because this is the case, Thils concludes that the separated Christian by reason of his baptism must be more ontologically joined to the Church than the infidel. He arrives at this conclusion through an analysis of the dimensions of the Church's unity.[33] The unity of the Church is considered first in its different stages of existence, secondly by reason of its perfection.

On the one hand one can speak of the unity existing in the Church triumphant (the Heavenly Jerusalem). Here would be gathered the elect who received justification in the Catholic Church, and those who received the fruits of the passion of Christ, even without knowing the Catholic Church. On the other hand one refers to the unity of the Church on earth. Here are assembled God's people in spiritual continuity with Israel of the Promise. This people of the New Alliance responding to the call of God the Father in faith are constituted in the unity of the Gospel and baptism, a unity which is formed and strengthened through the sacrament of the Eucharist. Each member by virtue of his baptism shares in the ministerial office of the Church and so bears witness to

---

[33] G. Thils, op. cit., cf. 236-241.

the Word of God in the present time. This role of witnessing is received from and sustained by that unique ministerial office, the Priesthood of Jesus Christ.

> "These ministers are united in collegiality which actualizes itself in the episcopate of each local Church, and which possesses in the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, a center of charity and unity, an arbitrator of apostolic truth, and a protector of the inherent diversity in the one authentic Catholicity."[34]

The second dimension of unity considered by Thils, the perfection of the Church's unity as existing among the faithful, is of concern here.[35] From this point of view the unity of the Church as realized in the life of its members is perfect only when it exists on three levels simultaneously.

(1) Supernatural unity--formed by the Holy Spirit who infuses the theology virtues of faith, hope, and charity in everyone who lives according to God's will. This unity Catholics share with all of those people, even outside the visible Church, who are, in the words of Suprema haec sacra, living in conformity to God's will.

(2) Sacramental unity--at this level the sacraments of the faith, particularly Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders, constitute unity among the faithful who participate in these same sacraments.

(3) Visible Communitarian unity--here are united all of the

---

[34]"Ces ministres sont, eux aussi, unis dans une collégialité foncière qui s'actualise dans l'épiscopat de chaque Eglise locale et qui possède dans l'évêque de Rome, le Pape, un centre de charité et d'unité, un arbitre de la vérité apostolique et un garant de la diversité inhérente à une authentique catholicité." Ibid., 238.

[35]Loc. cit.

faithful who profess the same faith, participate in the same worship, and submit themselves to the hierarchy of bishops under the direction of the Pope.

In this dimension the unity of the Church appears much more complex than it does when consideration is given only to the visible structure of the Church. Supernatural unity exists in a greater state of perfection in the separated Christian who has not rejected the life of the Spirit than in the Catholic who through sin has severed his union with Christ. Nor is the life of the Spirit the only bond of union between the separated Christian and the Church. There is, by reason of his baptism, a vital though unfulfilled bond of union joining the separated Christian to the Church. Since the letter of the Holy Office has removed the apparent antinomy between the doctrine of the Church extra ecclesiam nulla salus and the universal salvific will of Christ, Thils concludes that the separated Christian must enjoy a more vital union with the Roman Catholic Church than the infidel of good will.[36]

The document of the Holy Office has made it clear that there is only one Ark of Salvation, the Catholic Church. Thils is not lessening

---

[36]Thils compares the Church as the normative means for salvation of those who are saved within the Church with the theological formulation of the 'abnormal' state wherein those outside the Church are saved. The degree of union between the Church and the person saved outside the Church varies according to the manner in which the fruits of the Passion and Redemption of Christ are applied. Thus the separated Christian by reason of Baptism is more closely joined to the visible structure of the Church than is the unbeliever in good faith. Ibid., 241.

the necessity of the Church for salvation, nor is he setting up a Church within the Church. On the contrary he has established a theological basis for the union which exists between the separated Christian and the Church. This he does from an understanding of the manner in which the unity of the Church is realized among those who believe in Christ and from the teaching of Suprema haec sacra.

Gregory Baum points to this letter of the Holy Office as effecting an important clarification on the question of membership as discussed in the encyclical Mystici Corporis.[37] The encyclical referred to the condition of separated Christians outside the Church as being ordinati ad Ecclesiam. The use of the word ordinari touched off a great debate as to whether this was sufficient to constitute a membership in voto. According to Baum Suprema haec sacra gives more substance to the position of the Christian outside visible membership and confirms a membership in voto. By using the words adhaerere Ecclesiae, there is implied some habitual state of belonging, or at least some permanent supernatural structure. This is made even more evident from the official English translation which renders the words adhaerere Ecclesiae as "being in union with the Church." Baum also points out that this union with the Church by desire is said to be founded on supernatural faith. A further link, then, is established between the separated Christian and the Church which is the unique source of all faith in Christ. Baum concludes that the letter of the Holy Office definitively replies in

---

[37]See. G. Baum, That They May Be One, 29-32.

the affirmative to the question raised by the encyclical Mystici Corporis--can there be another way of belonging to the Body of Christ besides actual membership in the Roman Catholic Church?[38]

c) Summary

The Instruction of the Holy Office De motione oecumenica generated a more benevolent and permissive attitude toward the work of ecumenism. The concise formulation of the traditional doctrine extra ecclesiam nulla salus in the document Suprema haec sacra assisted Catholic ecumenical theologians in further clarifying the theological position of the separated Christian. Taken together these two documents were partially responsible for a significant transformation of the question suggested by Mystici Corporis regarding membership. The question now changes from 'Is the separated Christian in some way a member of the Body of Christ?' to 'To what degree is the separated Christian a member of the Body of Christ?' The final transformation to the question of the ecclesial reality of the separated Christian

---

[38]This is certainly the opinion of the majority of Catholic ecumenical theologians. Not all theologians agreed. John King notes that the letter uses the words ordinari and adhaerere interchangeably. Thus he states one cannot necessarily conclude that the word ordinari gives more precision or greater emphasis to the union with the Church through the votum as mentioned in Mystici Corporis. The implication seems to be that had such precision been intended by Pius XII the Holy Office would have preserved this formulation. Such an assumption seems to this writer gratuitous, for it ignores the obvious significance implied in the Holy Office's use of the word adhaerere which is certainly stronger than the word ordinari in this context. Furthermore it seems more consistent to view the letter of the Holy Office as a development of the encyclical's teaching on the votum. For Kings remarks see: op. cit., 294.

community remains to be seen. The influence of the Ecumenical Movement as a major factor enabling this transitus will be considered next.

3. The Ecumenical Movement

The Ecumenical Movement has exercised a tremendous influence on Catholic ecclesiology during the period in question. Among the separated communities of the West this movement has brought the separated Christians to a greater realization of the differences that divide themselves, not to mention those which separate them from the Roman Catholic Church. It is easy to understand, then, why dogmatic differences tended to be overlooked, or at least, why a common denominator was sought rather than any prolonged debate on dogmatic problems. Likewise, when a consideration of the Roman Catholic Church is undertaken, the differences separating us have always been considered from an anthropological, cultural, and psychological view point rather than from a dogmatic one. If any progress is to be made, however, serious discussion of the dogmatic causes of separation and a dogmatic basis for union must necessarily be considered. It will be seen that this concern for progress on the dogmatic level is perhaps the prevailing importance of Catholic interest in the ecclesiological significance of the separated communities.

The initial reaction of the Catholic Church to the Ecumenical Movement was indicated at the beginning of this chapter. That this movement prompted a closer examination of the theological condition

of the separated communities will be seen from a study of some of the more prominent Catholic Ecumenical theologians. Several excellent studies exist on the Ecumenical Movement itself. Our concern is with the response elicited on the part of Catholic theologians. Congar, by reason of the date as well as the influence of his writing, will be considered first. He has justly been called by some the pioneer of contemporary Catholic ecumenical theology.

a) Congar

Congar was one of the first among Catholic theologians to confront the theological problems of reunion issuing from the Ecumenical Movement. Already in 1937, he referred to the theological problem of reunion as one ". . . of reincorporating all genuine Christian values dispersed through the world into visible Catholicity."[39] This was, in fact, a prophetic statement of the path Catholic ecumenical theology followed in the next two decades. In chapter seven of his book Divided Christendom Congar studies the status of the separated Christians and the ecclesiological significance of their communities. An analysis of his opinion on this question will be taken up in chapter three of this thesis. For the present the significant point to note is that the Ecumenical Movement brought Congar to this consideration.

Referring to the work towards Christian unity within the Ecumenical Movement he makes the following comment:

---

[39] Y. Congar, Divided Christendom, 46.

> Among our separated brethren all strengthening of their interior life and intensification of their union with Christ really works towards reunion, for all that is of Christ in them tends effectively towards the Church, and far beyond anything perceptible to outward seeing, makes for their integration in the visible Body of the Lord.[40]

His positive stand toward ecumenism is not surprising then. Filled with respect for the Christian life existing among the separated communities and concerned with their quest for unity, Congar is led to examine the ecclesiological status of these communities. The condition of these communities from a theological point of view reflects a state wherein values and realities, destined of their nature to develop in unity, are kept unduly apart, isolated and therefore always incomplete and imperfect. Consequently, in response to the Ecumenical Movement's search for unity, it is important that Catholic theologians study the theological significance of these values existing outside the Church. These values by their very nature tend toward that perfect unity which is only found in the Catholic Church. The goal of Christian Unity sought by the separated communities, Congar concludes, must be ". . . Catholic unity or unity in fullness of the mystical Christ, by this we mean our aim is something which substantially already exists, for the one Church of Christ is a present reality, something already given, which we cannot create."[41] Thus he demonstrates that there is a

---

[40] Ibid., 240.

[41] Ibid., 253.

place for the Church in the Ecumenical Movement and a definite role for it to play.

Writing in the French periodical Lumieres d'Assise in 1946, Congar notes the changing attitude of the Church toward the Ecumenical Movement.[42] In the past activity with regard to reunion generally proceeded from a consideration of the separated communities which was entirely negative. They were seen strictly from a missionary point of view, not, however, in the sense of pagan mission work, but as though every effort must be made to convert them to the Catholic Communion. It was a question of persuading them, convincing them of the truth. They were wrong; the Church was right. They were in error; Catholics represented the only true Church. The Ecumenical Movement, according to Congar, was responsible for dispelling this one-sided view on the part of Catholic theologians. The dialogue flowing from this movement has unveiled the positive light present in these Christian Confessions. Their communities are seen not only as bearers of so many errors, or as branches cut from a tree and left to die; one now sees in them Christians struggling to live a life consecrated to God and the Gospel. In a word the concrete reality of their Christian lives is open for study, whereas in the past their doctrines were examined at a distance and scrutinized for orthodoxy.

Through ecumenical encounters one begins to understand that these people are good Christians, loyal and generous souls. Moreover, the

---

[42]See Y. Congar, Chrétiens En Dialogue, "Le Probleme Oecuménique," (Unam Sanctam 50. 81-8).

weight of this knowledge pushes one to see that they are such, not in spite of their confessions, but in and by their confessions. Unfortunately these people do not receive the integral deposit of faith, nor do they possess the sacramental means for growth in this faith. In view of this condition Congar states that the Catholic theologian seeking to serve the cause of unity is confronted with a certain dilemma. Which will best serve to promote unity: the traditional work of conversion or that of ecumenism? While acknowledging the validity of convert work provided the individual's conscience is respected, Congar doubts that such labor will solve the problem. In a qualitative sense, he reflects, perhaps total conversion is not necessary if one can see the positive values of the Christian communities working toward fulfillment in the unity of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church can and should enter the field of ecumenism, then, without any fear of compromising its orthodox and traditional ecclesiology. But while union represents for Catholics a reunion, an injustice is done the Catholic position if this reunion is conceived as a conversion pure and simple as though the Church could not be enriched by the genuine forms of Christian life present in these communities. It is the Ecumenical Movement, Congar infers, which has made Catholic theologians conscious of the fact that the catholicity of the Church is only imperfectly realized in the life of its members. Through the reunion with the separated Christians, the Church will be more fully catholic.

In 1959 Congar wrote an article for the periodical Informations Catholique International in which he describes the impact of the Ecumenical Movement on Catholic thought.[43] He points out that Catholics were inclined to view with suspicion the goals and ideals represented by other fields of learning. Today they recognize that the questions posed and the values incorporated by many of these groups especially the Ecumenical Movement deserve our respect and consideration.

b) Thils

Gustave Thils in his work on the history of the Ecumenical Movement discusses ecumenism and the meaning it should have for Catholic theology.[44] There can be no doubt, he says, that ecumenism is community oriented. Catholic theologians, however, do differ with regard to the community that is in question. They fall into two groups: one which considers primarily the separated Christian community; the other sees the Catholic community as the object of emphasis.

For the first group ecumenism is mainly concerned with the corporate separated community as such and not with the individual. From a theological point of view it is a case of determining the theological status of the separated community. Others in this group stress the need to perfect the 'elements' of the Church existing among these communities so that they might achieve their proper fulfillment within

---

[43] See Y. Congar, Chrétiens En Dialogue, "Propos Sur Le Travail Oecuménique." (Unam Sanctam 50. 141-43).

[44] Cf. G. Thils, op. cit., 288-92.

the Catholic community. This unilateral view of ecumenism, Thils explains, is the result of this group's understanding of the Church. For these people the Catholic Church possesses the perfection, at least in the essentials, of all the elements of the Christian life. Ecumenism, then, involves a change only on the part of the separated communities.

The second group, while not denying that the heart of ecumenism is centered in the separated communities, recognize the need for Catholic involvement in the dialogue. The initiative necessary to renovate the basic understanding of the Church within the separated community will only come about through dialogue. Thils would place himself with this second group.

Ecumenism for Thils must embrace activity in both communities. For the Catholic community it is a question of purifying and perfecting the diversity of Christian elements from within. These are the accidental perfections of the Church's life. Not accidental, however, as opposed to essential. These elements are intimately joined to and vitally connected with the essential nature of the Church. They are accidental in the sense that they are subject to perfection. Included here would be such elements as the episcopacy, sacramental rites, doctrinal formulations, and canon law, etc., all of which while perfect in their essence are verified in a perfectible manner within the local community of the Universal Church.

Now Thils like Congar sees ecumenism as involving the incorporation of these genuine Christian values existing among the separated communities into the authentic catholicity of the Roman Catholic Church.

Before these communities can recognize the Church as their home, however, they must be able to see in it living examples of the authentic Christian elements which they already possess. Thus, influenced by the Ecumenical Movement, Thils is brought to a study of the ecclesial reality of the separated communities. For Thils and Congar a new understanding of the note of catholicity contributes to their theological understanding of these communities. This will be seen in depth in chapter three.

Many Catholic theologians, including some engaged in ecumenical endeavors, feared that the dialogue between the Churches might lead to religious indifferentism. Thils addressed himself to this question in an article which appeared in Nouvelle Revue Théologique.[45] He suggests that the accusation of indifferentism arises from our failure to understand the positive aspects of the churches within the Ecumenical Movement. Were these communities merely non-Catholic, that is entirely negative in character, then the cry of indifferentism would be justified. However, sincere and intelligent participation in the work for Christian Unity will not run the risk of equivocating the truth concerning the Church. It seeks, on the contrary, to discover the positive Christian values among the separated communities. And this, not with any fear of indifferentism, but with a genuine concern that these good Christian souls might be more fully united to Christ in His One Church.

---

[45] See G. Thils, "Pour Mieux Comprendre Les Manifestations Oecuménique," NRT 84 (1962), 3-11.

Thils notes that beginning with Leo XIII many of the papal documents have treated the Christian patrimony existing among the separated communities. In the present ecumenical milieu these take on an even greater significance. Thus the ecumenical theologian is led to conclude that there is a real doctrinal current underlying the importance of the Christian patrimony of the other communities.[46] Ecumenism has advanced our understanding of the separated brethren. However, there are many who would say that ecumenical work is merely a compromise with Protestantism. Thils replies that it is really an actualization of a function proper to the Church. This follows from his definition of ecumenism as ". . . the manifestation and fulfillment, in every part of the world, of the interior Catholicity of the Church."[47] Catholicity and ecumenicity are very close, and in a certain context identical. Both are rooted in the mystery of the Church; both tend by their own supernatural dynamism to express themselves in a visible manner. Moreover, these two are coextensive. All of this indicates, says Thils, that the influence of ecumenism in the Roman Catholic Church is not making it Protestant, but rather actualizing more fully the authentic ecumenicity of the Church.

---

[46]Thus Roger Aubert notes that the acknowledgment by the Holy See of the Christian patrimony preserved among the separated Christians and the benefits to be received by the Church consequent on their reunion is only a recent development. See R. Aubert, Le saint-siège et l'union des Eglises, 155.

[47]". . . c'est la manifestation et l'accomplissement, sur toute la terre, de la catholicité intérieure de l'Église." G. Thils, art. cit., 9.

c) Baum

Gregory Baum finds in the papal documents evidence for a stand on ecumenism which nearly parallels the position of Thils. His two major premises are: (1) there is no indication in the papal sources that would equate ecumenism with missionary activity; (2) from these same sources he conceives the goal of ecumenism as the ". . . delicate task of discovering what the Spirit of Christ has wrought in dissident Christian groups and of pointing to the perfection of these gifts in the Catholic Church."[48] Catholic theologians, as well as their separated brothers, are also gaining a deeper understanding of the mystery of the Church through dialogue within the sphere of ecumenism. True, the Catholic Church possesses the fullness of the truth of Christ. As such it is inexhaustible in its content and infinitely perfectible in its expression. Consequently, Baum suggests that the Catholic Church can join in and learn from the separated Christians' search for the proper understanding of the unity of the Church.[49]

d) Bea

Cardinal Bea's writing in the area of ecumenism takes on an added theological significance in that his opinions reflect the love and concern for the separated communities so evident in the thought of Pope

---

[48]For a discussion of these two points, see G. Baum, op. cit., 77-80.

[49]Ibid., 123.

John XXIII. As president of the Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity, a commission established by the Holy Father himself, Bea's response to the Ecumenical Movement is characterized by a deep respect and interest in the Christian life of the separated communities. With Pope John as his mentor his speeches reflect the Holy Father's respect for the position of the separated communities which the latter humbly expressed in a talk delivered on January 30, 1959.

> We do not wish to put anyone in history on trial: we shall not seek to establish who was right and who was wrong. Responsibility is divided. We only want to say: let us come together, let us make an end of our divisions.[50]

It is quite apparent from his many addresses and articles that Bea recognizes positive supernatural values existing in the separated communities. Writing in La Civilta Cattolica he states that the separated brethren are members of the Church, albeit not in the full sense.[51] Because of the rampant secularism in society, the necessity to bring these people to full membership and unity in the Church is all the more urgent. While unity is an essential note of the Church willed by Christ, it is not yet complete or perfected in its concrete reality. Hence ecumenism seeks to fulfill the unity which is lacking in the exterior life of the Church because of the division.

e) Toronto Statement by Central Committee of World Council

---

[50]Cf. Herder Korrespondenz, 13 (1959-60), 274.

[51]See A. Bea, "Il Cattolico Di Fronte Al Problema Dell'Unione Dei Christiani," La Civilta Cattolica 112 (1961), 127-29.

Within the Ecumenical Movement itself an ecclesiology developed rapidly during the period covered by the above mentioned theologians. Considering that a World War intervened between the Second World Conference on Faith and Order in 1937, and the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948, the problem of the Church was quickly seen as a major obstacle to Unity. While the World Council at Amsterdam admitted a certain unity arising from the Ecumenical Movement itself, it was keenly aware that the member churches failed to give visible expression to this unity. They were united by their faith in a Church founded by Christ and in the mission of reconciliation which He gave that Church.[52] The visible form which that Church should take and the nature of the historical continuity of their present churches with the Church of Christ eluded them. Thus Cardinal Bea has noted that the Protestant world has come to grips with the problem of the Church. They have come to a realization of the meaning and importance of the Church. Yet they are confused by the implications this has for them as followers of Christ.[53]

The French Dominican, M. J. LeGuillou, feels that the search for unity was expressed within theWorld Council has undergone a change in direction. Confronted as the member churches are by inherent differences

---

[52]The message of the First World Council of Churches is contained in a documentary edited by Lukas Vischer. See L. Vischer, ed., A Documentary History of the Faith and Order Movement 1927-1963, 75-84.

[53]See A. Bea, The Unity of Christians, 120.

the World Council seeks unity through the missionary nature of the churches rather than through a dogmatic understanding of the Church itself. There has resulted a rediscovery of the mission of the Church and its nature which is an appeal to manifest the integrity and fullness of the Church of Jesus Christ. The movement tends then to arrive at a better understanding of the mission of the Church inasmuch as it signifies the totality of its vocation. It sees unity arising from the reciprocal action of service to the world and community. That is, the entire life of the church, its witness and its service, are an expression of its communion. This mission confided by God to His Church builds up unity. LeGuillou states that the separated communities, in seeking to fulfill this mission of service and witness, will come to the realization that it does not possess real unity as a Church. Nevertheless, he concludes that the missionary nature of the Catholic Church and the member churches of the World Council provide a common meeting ground. Here we can come together in a concerted effort to bring Christ to an areligious society. Hopefully, the separated communities will reach a deeper appreciation of the institutional nature of the Church and find the unity they seek in the one Church of Christ.[54]

The problem of the Church continued to be a major issue at subsequent assemblies of the World Council of Churches and at meetings of the World Conference on Faith and Order. Ecclesiology, as discussed

---

[54]See M. J. LeGuillou, Mission et Unité 1.219-22.

in the World Council of Churches, is subject matter for a study in itself. What is pertinent here is the fact that the Ecumenical Movement as centered in the World Council of Churches has brought the separated communities to evaluate the mystery of the Church. The rediscovery of Church within the World Council has in turn drawn the Catholic ecumenical theologians to study the ecclesial significance of the separated communities. LeGuillou and the other theologians treated above are but a few cases in point. While the Ecumenical Movement was partly responsible for this development, the Toronto statement by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches might be sighted as more immediately responsible.

The Central Committee meeting in Toronto in 1950 sought to clarify certain misconceptions concerning the nature of the recently formed World Council of Churches. The statement entitled "The Ecclesiological Significance of the World Council of Churches" presents, first in a negative way, what the Council is not, then, in a positive manner, certain assumptions upon which the Council is based.[55] Of particular interest to the Catholic ecumenical theologians was the fifth assumption which reads as follows:

> The member Churches of the World Council recognize in other Churches elements of the true Church. They consider that this mutual recognition obliges them to enter into a serious conversation with each other in the hope that these elements of truth will lead to the recognition of the full truth and to unity based on the full truth.[56]

---

[55] L. Vischer, ed., op. cit., 167-76.

[56] Ibid., 174.

In explaining this assumption the statement lists the preaching of the Word, the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, and the administration of the sacraments as examples of the elements preserved among the member churches. It further explains that these elements are not mere remnants but rather dynamic elements of the Church's life. They are a sign of unity and should be recognized as such in order that the fuller unity implied in them might be achieved.

It cannot be denied that this statement gave rise to an immediate response on the part of Catholic ecumenical theologians. The initial reaction was a renewal in the study of the vestigia ecclesiae.[57] From this point on one notices a decided change from a consideration of the ecclesial condition of the separated Christian to that of the separated community. Moreover, the ecclesial reality of these communities is measured precisely in terms of the elements preserved among them. Many of the Catholic ecumenical theologians expressed the significance of the elements of the Church in the very words of the Toronto Statement. This will be seen in chapter three when the theological basis for an ecclesial reality is examined.

4. A Change In Theological Method

From the three sections treated above it is evident that a development took place among Catholic ecumenical theologians. There is a

---

[57] Boniface Willems examines the question of membership in the Church. He notes that the vestigia ecclesiae discussed in the Toronto Statement occasioned a broadening of the question from the individual to the separated community. See B. Willems, "Who Belongs to the Church?" Concilium 1 (1965), 65.

definite progression from a recognition of some kind of belonging, first for the separated Christian, and then for his community. The People of God theology, statements of the Holy Office, and the Ecumenical Movement were described above as contributing to this development. However, no one of these factors either individually or collectively would have given rise to such an evolution were it not for a change in theological method. The fact that theologians did not even consider the question of ecclesial reality until the present century should come as no surprise. The first chapter showed that the apologetical framework of ecclesiology would not allow such a question to be asked. That Catholic theologians today have not only asked the question, but attempted an answer can best be understood from the new approach they have taken toward the separated communities.

This new approach or theological method has been explained by different authors in various ways. However, certain basic characteristics common in all of these descriptions can be discerned. Thus this method is seen at once as existential, positive, and historical. The theologian no longer regards dogmatic formulations as exhaustive definitions of the sacred truths which might without further exegesis be applied to present day problems. He has begun to realize that the turths of the faith are conditioned by the historical circumstances and the cultural milieu of the times in which they were formulated. In most cases, then, they only present one aspect of the truth. Catholic theologians have become aware, especially as regards the separated

Christians, that the mystery of the Church demands a reexamination of the traditional teaching in light of present day problems. No less an authority than Pope Pius XII in the encyclical Humani Generis encouraged a study of this kind.[58] That such a new theological method has brought Catholic ecumenical theologians to a consideration of the ecclesial reality of the separated Christians is suggested by the following statement of Cardinal Bea.

> Out of the fullness of the timeless truth revealed by God and proclaimed by the Church aspects are coming to light which were not emphasized in times when the situation to be met and the problems to be solved were quite different.[59]

In an address delivered in Paris on the Council and Christian Unity, Bea describes this new theological method. He points out that it has fostered a marvelous rapproachement with the separated communities and will continue to do so.[60] This method requires that the theologian confront the existential situation of the separated communities today without prejudice because of the clear teaching in his own Church on unity. In fact he cannot answer the question raised among the separated communities concerning the Church simply by referring them to the traditional teaching of the Church. Rather he must refer

---

[58]"Accedit quod uterque doctrinae divinitus revelatae fons tot tantosque continet thesauros veritatis, ut nunquam reapse exhauriatur." Pius XII, Humani Generis, AAS, 42 (1950), 568. Eng. tr. (Washington: N.C.W.C., 1950).

[59]A. Bea, op. cit., 99.

[60]Ibid., 117-24.

to the sources of that teaching which are scripture and tradition. There he must seek out those elements of revealed truth which are pertinent to the problems concerning the Church today. Only by bringing the questions of today to the truths which were formulated yesterday can a conceptualization of revealed truth answering the needs of the present be reached. Bea notes that this method has been popular among the secular sciences for some time now. He describes it as an historico-sociological method which has become increasingly more widespread in theological research.

Kevin McNamara makes reference to the same phenomenon though in different terms. He speaks of the renewed interest in the sources of revelation stemming from the theory of evolution proposed by Darwin and his followers.[61] This effected in the theologians a rediscovery of the linear concept of time. They were quickly impressed with the fact that ideas as well as man have undergone an evolutionary process. Consequently, it is necessary to study the development of an idea before one can have an adequate understanding of the idea itself. McNamara points out that the application of this method is particularly evident in the area of ecclesiology. He indicates that this system, characterized by a return to the sources of revelation, was responsible for the richer appreciation of the Christian life as lived among the separated communities.

---

[61]Cf. K. McNamara, "The Idea of the Church," ITQ 33 (1966), 99-101.

Throughout the writings of Congar and Thils treating the separated Christians this new theological approach can be seen at work. In the preface of his book Vraie et Fausse Réforme dans L'Église, Congar mentions a few of the principles which have guided him in his study of the Church.[62] He remarks that the life of the Church and not merely the constitutive elements of its structure must be studied, keeping in mind that this structure is living. Regarding the separated communities, he notes that theologians were wont to study them merely in reference to the unity of orthodoxy, and consequently understood only what was lacking in them. As a result of this approach there are very few manuals of theology which have considered the positive aspects of Christianity among the separated communities. Thus he remarks, "Generally, Catholic theology has little considered the Christian realities in the religious subject."[63] An adequate study of the separated communities, according to Congar, must consider the positive elements of the Church existing among them and their historical development. In this way a true evaluation of their meaning today will result. Thils likewise gives great emphasis to the positive outlook which this new method stresses. In studying the ecclesiological significance of the separated communities, his starting point is the assumption that there must be something positive in their life from the very fact that their members

---

[62]Cf. Y. Congar, Vraie et Fausse Réforme dans L'Église, 8-10.

[63]"D'une façon générale, la théologie catholique a peu considéré les réalités chrétiennes dans le sujet religieux." Ibid., 9.

are baptized Christians.[64] Further, his analysis of the theological condition of these communities is based on a study of the historical development of the teaching of the magisterium in view of the present day ecumenical problems.

Not all Catholic ecumenical theologians have approached the separated Christians in the above frame of reference. Thus Edward Hanahoe begins with a definition of ecumenism which would exclude the necessity of recognizing any positive values existing among the separated brethren. He conceives ecumenism as a divinely constituted work whose aim is "the conversion and return of baptized dissidents to the unity of the Mystical Body of Christ, which involves their acceptance of the faith and communion of the See of Peter and the Catholic Church throughout the world."[65] There can be no question of ecumenism involving a recognition of values in other communities because of his inflexible adherence to the past.[66] Thus his starting point is the magisterium from which he proceeds to examine the separated communities. Whereas the 'new' theological method examines the magisterium in light of the

---

[64]That Thils was brought to a consideration of the ecclesial reality of the separated communities by this method is evident from any of his works cited thus far. It is particularly apparent in the following article. See G. Thils, "Chrétiens Séparés et 'éléments' d'Église," Collectanea Mechliniensia 47 (1962), 470-72.

[65]E. Hanahoe, Catholic Ecumenism (Studies in Sacred Theology 2nd Series 76. 51-2).

[66]See E. Hanahoe, "Ecclesiology and Ecumenism," (Part I), AER 147 (1962), 236.

present reality of the separated Christians to see if any further understanding of their condition can be had. Consequent, then, to the Catholic doctrine of salvation outside the Church and the essential unity of the Roman Catholic Church, Hanahoe equates conversion with ecumenism. To attempt to recognize Christian values among their communities will only prolong the division and run the risk of depriving them of the greater possibility of salvation within the Catholic Church.[67]

The Italian Jesuit, Domenico Grasso, takes an apologetical stance similar to Hanahoe. In presenting the efforts made to promote Christian unity by the pontiffs, he does not seem to notice any development in their treatment of the separated Christians. He treats the teaching of the Popes on this subject from Pius IX to John XXIII as though each were merely a repetitious reflection of the preceding.[68] There is no question of the Roman Catholic Church taking a positive view of the Ecumenical Movement. For the one Church of Christ the main task is to demonstrate to the separated brethren that the Roman Catholic Church alone possesses the Unity which they are seeking. Thus he says of the Ecumenical Movement, "How can one find the proper direction, when he does not even know where he is going?"[69] Throughout his book, È Pos-

---

[67] Ibid., (Part II), 323-24.

[68] D. Grasso, È Possibile L'Unione Delle Chiese?, 70-73.

[69] "Come trovare la direzione guista, quando non si sa dove andare?" Ibid., 140.

sibile L'Unione Delle Chiese? Grasso's approach is seen clearly as an antithesis of that positive method described above. The apologetical method of Grasso and Hanahoe, while profound in its presentation and understanding of the Church, fails to meet the demands of contemporary theology.

Summary

It will be noted that this chapter concentrated more on the 'how' of the development rather than on the development itself. Nevertheless, the little that was seen of the ecumenical theologians' treatment of the separated Christians and their communities leaves no doubt but that a transition did take place. Between Mystici Corporis and the Second Vatican Council various theological basis for an ecclesial reality were proposed by the Catholic theologians. Much more of this development in se will be seen in chapter three when the actual basis for an ecclesial reality of these communities is examined. As was indicated at the beginning of this chapter the precise theological condition of these communities was never resolved by the theologians. The following chapter will show to what extent Catholic theologians have determined the ecclesial reality of the separated community.

CHAPTER III

THE ECCLESIAL REALITY OF THE SEPARATED COMMUNITIES ACCORDING TO CATHOLIC THEOLOGIANS

It is generally recognized that the ecclesiological teaching of the Second Vatican Council regarding the separated Christians was influenced by the work of Catholic ecumenical theologians. It will be seen that the teaching of the Fathers bears the imprint of the development which took place in ecclesiology following the encyclical Mystici Corporis Christi. In this chapter we want to examine more closely the theological understanding of the separated communities as developed by several Catholic ecumenical theologians. While this chapter will treat a limited number of theologians it would be wrong to conclude that these men alone were responsible for the new understanding of the separated communities. In a certain sense the contemporary view of these communities has resulted from the theological maturation of ecclesiology, the roots of which can be traced to post Reformation apologetics. Nevertheless, the theologians considered here have certainly been the most prominent in the field of ecumenism. There is no doubt that they have been the most explicit among Catholic theologians in expressing their views on the ecclesial reality of the separated communities.

A. General Comments on the Separated Communities

Before considering those theologians who have expounded at length on the separated communities a brief consideration will be given to other theologians who have made some significant remarks on this question.

1. Jerome Hamer

Hamer does not explicitly refer to the ecclesial reality of the separated communities. He is, however, interested in the meaning and value of certain authentic Christian elements preserved among these communities. Some theologians, he states, have attempted to show how the Church is in formation among the separated communities because of the presence of these elements. Hamer cautions against such a presumption without first establishing whether these elements are truly partial realities of the one Church. The reality of the Church, he observes, is constituted by its essential notes. But one cannot assume that the partial expression of these elements among the separated communities constitutes an incipient foundation for the reality of the Church. The fact is that many of the separated communities regard these elements not as constitutive of their reality but merely as signs.[1]

---

[1]Cf. J. Hamer, "Le Baptême et L'Église. A propos des 'vestigia ecclesiae'," Irenikon 25 (1952), 146-51.

Hamer points out that the root idea of protestantism is complex. It is not simply a question of separating error from truth. The two are interwoven. Simultaneously there exists the principle of the reformation and the common element of a simple Christian tradition. Now at the time of the reformation these Christian values were extensive; today this may not be so. Hence one must examine the common elements on two levels: (1) the level of reality, and (2) the level of belief. At the level of reality baptism would be the first element to be studied. On the level of belief attention would be directed to the divinity of Christ, the divine authority of the Sacred Scriptures, and the unity of the Church.

Hamer remarks that the Christian elements preserved among the separated communities bear the marks of the synthesis which contains them. Thus the element can be tainted by the other dogmatic beliefs of the community. It will be necessary, then, to give the common element its proper dimension before taking support from it.[2]

Hamer acknowledges the existence of authentic Christian values existing among the separated communities. They must be studied, however, in relation to the entire Christian life of the separated community before one can properly evaluate their theological significance.

---

[2]Cf. J. Hamer, "The Mission of Catholic Ecumenism," Cross Currents 6 (1956), 136-39.

2. Charles Journet

The two volume work of Journet, L'Église Du Verbe Incarné, is in fact a treatise De Ecclesia. His consideration of the separated communities is, then, academic rather than ecumenical in approach. A lengthy study is not given to the other communities. He does, however, develop at great length a consideration of individual membership of the separated Christian.[3]

In volume two of his work Journet refers to the vestigia ecclesiae as a part of the means of salvation which the separated communities have preserved. These communities, he notes, are not totally heretical for they have preserved many of the riches which Christ gave to His Church. The notion of an heretical community breaks down before the pressure of the Christian values which it affirms. All that remains, then, is a "patrimony of heresy."[4]

It is the Holy Spirit who sustains the Christian values preserved among the separated communities. Because of these elements, Journet refers to the separated communities as fragments of the Catholic Church. These Christian elements have been separated from the one Church and because they are separated, they are mixed with error. Nevertheless,

---

[3]Journet states that the individual Christians outside the Church are invisible members of the visible Church. That is the movement of grace in them keeps them joined to the one Church, but at the same time because they remain faithful to their separated communion they are not visibly joined to the Church. Cf. C. Journet, L'Église du Verbe Incarné 2. 1056-81, 1293.

[4]Cf. ibid., 718-22.

Journet states, these Christian elements do create a certain rapport between the separated communities and the Catholic Church. It remains for the theologians to determine the theological status of these communities.[5]

3. C. J. Dumont

In justifying the work of ecumenism in general, Dumont makes the distinction between an essential and an accidental perfection of the Church. By an essential perfection he means that there is nothing lacking to the indefectible nature of whatever element the Church possesses. An accidental perfection concerns the manner in which the elements of the Church find themselves realized in the life of the Church. Thus the former does not admit of degrees of perfection while the latter does.[6]

The Catholic Church possesses the essential perfection of unity which it can never loose. Nevertheless, to the degree that there are divisions among Christians the Church is lacking in the accidental perfection of its unity. The unity is imperfect because it does not include all of those baptized outside the Church. What is the relationship to the Church of these communities who accept Christ? Based on the papal documents, Dumont notes, the separated communities taken as a whole do not form an integral part of the Church. Nevertheless, they

---

[5]Cf. ibid., 722-28.

[6]Cf. C. Dumont, Approaches to Christian Unity, 79-82.

do possess in varying degrees a part of the supernatural reality which the Church preserves in its entirety. Through these elements the separated communities participate to a limited extent in the three-fold function of governing, teaching, and sanctifying exercised by the Church. Consequently, Dumont says, it is not proper to speak of the separated communities as being in or out of the Church. Because of these authentic Christian elements one must speak of these communities as being in imperfect communion with the Church.[7]

4. M. J. LeGuillou

LeGuillou speaks of the relationship between the separated communities and the Catholic Church in terms of the Christian patrimony which they have preserved. Of the seven sacraments they have only maintained baptism and marriage. Nevertheless, they share to an extent in the magisterial and jurisdictional power of the Church insofar as they recognize the ancient Councils and submit to the Word of God. Their Christian patrimony is not without alloy, however, mingled as it is with the principles of error.

The emphasis today, however, is more and more on the positive aspects of the separated communities. The foundation for this position is the ontological reality of baptism which orders these communities to the eucharistic communion and to the redemptive sacrifice in

---

[7]Cf. ibid., 131-38.

the Church. The Church's one concern is that the separated communities in their subjective authenticity might reach a more profound understanding of the mystery of Christ. Hence the Church's essential objective in working to safeguard these sacred Christian traditions is to recall these communities to that fullness which had formally been theirs. The separated communities, LeGuillou observes, enjoy a certain communion with the Catholic Church since they have preserved genuine Christian elements.[8]

LeGuillou notes that these communities are oriented to the Catholic Church by the internal dynamism of the elements which by their nature tend to reunite with their source. The Catholic Church, he states, is conscious of the error represented in these communities as well as their positive Christian life. According to the necessity of its mission in a determined context the Church has emphasized one aspect or the other. Thus faced with aetheism and the dechristianization of society the Church has stressed in our days their union with Christ and their baptism into the one Church.[9]

---

[8]Cf. M. LeGuillou, Mission et Unité 2. 104-09. A similar treatment can also be found in a work edited by the same author. Cf. M. LeGuillou, ed., "L'Eglise Catholique et l'oecuménisme," Le Christ et L'Église, 237-43.

[9]While not detracting from the value which he places in these elements LeGuillou's position appears not only apologetic but extremely pragmatic. He allows no room for the development of dogma or recognition of the historic conditions which determined to a large extent the relations of the Roman Catholic Church with the separated communities. One would hope that the movement toward unity today is a sincere effort on both sides to grasp the mystery of the Church. If our dialogue is based on a united front against a common enemy, the front will fall when the enemy is defeated and dialogue will return to diatribe.

Summary

Common to all of the theologians considered above is an acknowledgment of a certain vestigial unity which joins the separated communities to the Catholic Church.[10] The basis for this unity are the authentic Christian elements which are present in these communities. Foremost among these Christian realities are the sacrament of baptism and the Sacred Scriptures. United to the one Church of Christ and sustained by His Holy Spirit, these Christian elements seek their perfection in the Catholic Church. It remains for the theologian, then, to further determine the ecclesiological status of these communities because of the Christian elements preserved therein.

B. Theological Approaches to the Ecclesial Reality of The Separated Communities

1. Yves Congar

Much of the enthusiasm which Congar brought to the ecumenical movement can be traced to his association with Abbe Couturier. In 1939, he wrote an historical and theological treatise on the ecumenical movement which has remained a primary source for the theology of ecumenism down to the Second Vatican Council. It is mainly from this work, Chretiens Desunis, that we find Congar's teaching on the

---

[10]The following articles treat the separated communities in the same manner: F. Sullivan, "De Unitate Ecclesiae: Doctrina Catholica et Doctrina quae praevalet in Concilio Mundiali Ecclesiarum," Analecta Gregorianum 43 (1962), 510-26. K. McNamara, "The Theology of Christian Unity," ITQ 28 (1961), 255-78.

theological condition of the separated communities. While many of his writings since 1939 deal with ecumenism, none of them has been explicitly concerned with the ecclesial reality of the separated communities to the extent that they are treated in the above mentioned work.

After treating the history of the divisions in the Church, both East and West, and studying the ecumenical movement in the early part of this century, Congar directs his attention to the separated Christians and their relations to the Catholic Church. He is convinced that any work toward Christian Unity must begin from a solid understanding of the relative status of the partner in dialogue. To begin at the level of opposing doctrines will lead no where. His study of the Malines Conversations convinced him of the need to determine from a Catholic view point the theological position of the other communities. When one answers the questions, what are these people? and, what are their communities? then one will be able to examine more fruitfully their life and beliefs.

a) The Status of the Separated Christian in Relation to the Church

The first fact that confronts us is that there are many Christians outside the visible Catholic Church who have been baptized and profess faith in Jesus Christ. These souls, says Congar, must in some fashion belong to the Church for having received grace they cannot be alien to the mystical Body of the Lord. If we believe that the Catholic Church is the one Church of Christ and truly his mystical Body, then

theologically speaking there is only one conclusion to be drawn regarding the separated Christians. They must be recognized as our brothers and in some way members of the Catholic Church.

This creates the problem, Congar states, of making Christendom more extensive than the visible Church. Congar suggests that this disproportion can be explained by a corresponding imbalance in the exercise of Christ's priesthood and kingship. By his priestly work Christ wills to save all. But while his kingdom extends to the ends of the earth his reign is only visibly exercised in the Catholic Church. Thus His kingdom is manifest in its perfection in the Catholic Church, outside of which His reign is interior, exercised in the hearts of men. For this reason Christendom is broader than the visible reality, for Christ's saving work reaches beyond the visible Church. The reality, then, of Christ's mercy as Savior surpasses the visible realm of His kingship. Thus the Church saves to a greater extent than it rules, and incorporates more members than it claims as subjects.[11]

The basis for this incomplete membership cannot be a distinction between the soul and body of the Church. Congar insists that these two realities must be coextensive. He avoids the distinction between body and soul by considering membership along the traditional lines of _in re_ and _in voto_. Now the Church is humanity reconciled with God in

---

[11]Cf. Y. Congar, _Divided Christendom_, 221-24.

Christ. Through the Church man has been recreated in soul and body by union with Christ. The Church has received from Christ the means by which man is given this new life. There is, then, perfect membership in the one who lives according to all of the principles of the new life and imperfect membership in the one who lives by one or other of the principles. The former is a member of the Church *in re*; the latter is a member *in voto*.

The theological basis for the incorporation of the separated Christian into the Church is of course baptism. As infants the separated Christians are fully incorporated into the one Church of Christ. The child, destined for full participation in the sacramental life of the Church, is denied this reality because of the institutional imperfection of his community. The separated communities do not possess all of the living principles whereby the Church brings man into full communion with Christ. Supposing, however, that the separated Christian does not break his bond of union of love and faith in Christ, he will retain a true and real, though incomplete, membership in the Church. It is an incomplete and invisible membership joining the separated Christian to the Church insofar as he is joined to Christ. It is, Congar says, a spiritual incorporation, *in voto*, in the Church. The fact that he belongs to the Church is described by Congar as a derivative truth. That is, it is a truth which necessarily follows from the axiom *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*.[12]

---

[12]Cf. *ibid*., 224-37.

b) The Status of the Separated Community in Relation to the Church

Can the same principles upon which an imperfect membership is established for the separated Christian be applied to the separated community as such? Congar replies in the negative. The individuals, he says, are given membership on the basis of their good faith which relates them to a given whole which is the Catholic Church. Now if the separated communities were to unite, there is no given whole of which one could say they form a part. The focal point of unity would be a post factum reality, and hence they would form at most a federation of communities. Further, as communities, they form a legal body which cannot be the subject of good faith. The separated communities, then, cannot be said to possess any degree of membership in the Church.

It should be noted that Congar speaks of union with the Church in two different senses. When speaking of the individual separated Christian he evaluates his membership in terms of belonging to the Catholic Church. When referring to the separated community, however, he speaks of the possibility of unity or communion arising from the union of the separated communities. He views the question in this way because the ecumenical movement at the time was facing the problem of unity arising from the multiplicity of diverse Christian bodies. In this respect Congar does not so much consider the ecclesial reality of these

communities as the degree of unity which might arise from their coming together.[13]

When considering the separated communities as such, in terms of the service they perform for their members, Congar does speak of them as imperfect realizations of the one Church. He refers to these communities as elements of the Church insofar as "they have preserved in their very constitution as a religious body elements or principles which pertain to the integral reality of the one Church."[14] The individual separated bodies insofar as they have preserved something of the means God ordained to unite men with Himself are, in spite of error, in possession of something which belongs to the nature and integrity of the one Church. Now the members of these communities can be truly said to be sanctified in and by them in the measure in which the Word of God is preached and the sacrament of baptism is administered by the community. At the same time, Congar notes, inasmuch as they are separated groups it is in spite of them that souls are sanctified. Thus he recognizes the presence of a two-fold set of principles constituting these communities. The one group constitutes them as separated communities, the other group belong by right to the Catholic Church and account for their imperfect ecclesial reality.[15]

---

[13]Cf. ibid., 240-42.

[14]Ibid., 242.

[15]Cf. ibid., 243-46.

In subsequent articles dealing with the terminology used in the ecumenical movement Congar approaches indirectly the question of the ecclesial reality of the separated communities.

For dialogue to have any effect at all there must be a common understanding of the terms used. It often happens that the same theological vocabulary has two entirely different meanings among Catholic and Protestant scholars. It is necessary, then, that the words used in ecumenical dialogue be mutually acceptable and expressive of the reality which they signify. Congar notes that the problem becomes particularly acute when one attempts to describe or define the separated communities in terms of the one Church of Christ. Many of these communities refer to themselves as confessions. The word confession, however, has one meaning for the separated community and another for the Catholic theologian. Congar notes that neither definition expresses the real nature of the separated community and so should not be used in dialogue.[16]

As the word confession does not suitably describe the separated community Congar explores the possibility of designating these communities in terms of the word Church. He notes that historically the Church never referred to other religious groups by the word Church. It was impossible for the early Christians to think that the Church

---

[16]Congar discusses the traditional meaning of the word confession in the early Church and compares it with the use it has among the separated communities. Cf. Y. Congar, "Note Sur Les Mots 'Confession', 'Église' Et 'Communion'," Chrétiens En Dialogue, 211-24.

could exist outside the one Church of Christ. For this reason the word Church referred only to the spiritual, heavenly body of God's people. Other religious groups were termed in a pejorative sense as synagogue. That is, they were the earthly gathering of people. An examination of the magisterium also reveals the fact that the Church never describes the communities of the West as Church. Why?

According to Congar there are a certain number of essential elements whose presence constitute the reality we call Church. When these elements are more or less completely realized then there is a Church. To speak this way seems to make the Church simply a juridical, quantitative and entirely exterior reality. Yet one can only understand the reality which is the Church by examining the deeds of Christ. In a certain sense, Congar says, Christ did not establish a Church. The people of God existed since Abraham. What Christ did was to grant or institute a New Dispensation by which not just a nation, but all men would be called to share this gift from God.

Now the elements of this New Dispensation which constitute the Church correspond to the threefold function of Christ as prophet, priest, and king. They are: (1) revelation and the deposit of evangelical faith, (2) the institution of the sacraments, especially baptism and the eucharist, but also those exercised by the apostles, in particular the laying on of hands for the ministry, and (3) the institution of the Apostolic ministry which is responsible for the deposit of faith and the celebration of the sacraments. These are

the essential elements, which, when they are present and active, constitute men as the true people of God. All of these elements received and professed by the Church come from Christ and the apostles through the Church. Congar observes that there can only be one Church in which the fullness of these elements is transmitted since the time of Christ. Further, the one and only Church is composed of members. Thus as the Church extends itself from age to age new communities are constantly being formed in which there is reproduced the nature of the one Church. These new communities or local churches are joined through apostolic succession in continuity with the deposit of apostolic faith, sacraments, and sacred power.

There is then a structure of the Church which a local Church can realize and whose essence will be present in the local Church. The constitutive elements of the local Church are the same as those mentioned above. It is, Congar says, in view of the absence of the integral possession of these elements that the magisterium refuses to designate the separated communities of the West as Church. He notes that even the Universal Church is constituted by these elements. But, the predominant characteristic of the Universal Church is its apostolicity. Christ did not intend to found merely local Churches, but by giving the supreme authority to Peter He established a Universal Church to which all Churches are drawn by apostolic ties. There can be no Church, then, without apostolic succession. There can be no true communion of local Churches with the Universal Church without submission

to the authority of Peter. Thus in the theological rigorous sense of the word no community can be qualified as a Church, even a local Church, where there is no apostolic succession.[17]

How then are we to describe the separated communities of the West? By denying the possibility of describing them as Church does Congar refuse to acknowledge their ecclesial reality? No! He rejects the word Church because it is open to theological dispute, and the word confession because it is not apt to express the reality of the separated community. Consequently, he chooses the word communion as the most fitting word to describe the separated communities. He defines communion according to the French Dictionary as "union de plusieurs personnes dans la meme foi." This word, he notes, designates exactly what it refers to much more satisfactorily than community, religious body, or society. Further, it includes the values of the Church without prejudicing certain questions which the use of the word Church poses in Catholic theology. Communion is well suited for use in dialogue since it can be applied to Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant. Thus communion is a Christian term whose fullness, content, and beauty allows it to designate all the churches for which the ecumenical movement seeks unity.[18]

---

[17]Cf. ibid., 227-36.

[18]Cf. Ibid., 236-41.

It is clear from these remarks by Congar that the separated communities have preserved genuine elements of the Church which give rise to their ecclesial reality.

2. Gustave Thils

The most detailed treatment by Thils of the separated communities and the question of their ecclesial reality is found in his work Histoire Doctrinale Du Mouvement Oecuménique, first published in 1955. Here, from a re-examination of the Church's understanding of itself he seeks to establish the theological significance of the separated communities. The basis for the ecclesial reality which he finds present among the separated communities results from his evaluation of the elements of the Church. However, before giving a precise theological analysis of these communities he considers their general significance insofar as they approximate the reality of the Church.

Thils notes that some theologians deny any ecclesiological importance to these communities. He finds this hard to reconcile with the saving image which these communities present to their people. These communities possess a certain visible unity resulting from their profession of faith, reception of baptism, adherence to the precepts of the Lord, and the evangelical moral discipline. Moreover, they are guided by the pastoral direction of their ministers. These communities, Thils concludes, are means of salvation for their people. Granted the Catholic Church is the normative means, according to the

teaching of the Instruction De motione oecumenica these communities can bring salvation to their people. It is by valid sacramental rites that the non-Roman Christians are drawn to the supernatural life and enjoy the supernatural effects of baptism and marriage. It is by the ministry of pastors that the separated Christians hear the word of God and unite themselves to the sacrifice of praise in their community. Thus, Thils states, these communions are a means of salvation even if one states that this means does not correspond to all that which Christ requires for his own Church.[19]

From the foregoing it is evident that Thils takes a positive view of the separated communities. It is important to examine now the theological basis he posits for the ecclesial reality of these communities and its consequent effect on the essential notes of the Church.

a) Elements of the Church As Theological Basis for Ecclesial Reality

It is significant that Thils refers to this question by the term éléments d'Église rather than the traditional term vestigia ecclesiae. One immediately suspects that he will attach great importance to the elements of the Church existing among the separated communities. In fact, Thils regards the question of the elements as the most significant problem raised by the ecumenical movement. He notes that the theory of elements of the Church is a complex one. It is nevertheless

---

[19] Cf. G. Thils, Histoire Doctrinale Du Mouvement Oecuménique, 228-29.

a most important problem deserving of careful consideration for it can bring a much needed clarification to ecumenical encounters.

Thils approaches the question of the elements from an historical perspective. He first examines the place they held in the ancient Church, the documents of the magisterium, and finally among the theologians. It was the common teaching of the Church from the earliest times that only the Roman Catholic Church possessed the four essential marks of the Church. However, even the Catholic apologists following the Reformation acknowledged their imperfect existence among the separated communities. This is a fact, Thils notes, which is not always evident and only reveals itself from a comparative study of contemporary apologetics. The modern history of the notes of the Church, he says, shows by an indirect way that the Catholic apologists have always recognized the existence of certain Christian values, even ecclesial values, in the separated communions.[20]

These elements, Thils says, are certainly authentic Christian values which pertain properly to the Church. Yet, they can and do exist in some of the separated communities, at times by virtue of the very structure of these communities. This fact poses a question. What

---

[20]Thils remarks that the apologists were wont to distinguish between positive and negative notes of the Church. The positive note is a property of the true Church, visible and exclusive. Thus it cannot be found in the other churches. A negative note is a visible property which, while necessary for the one Church, is not exclusive to it. The negative note, then, can be found in the other communities. The apologists did recognize the existence of negative notes among the separated communities. Cf. ibid., 247-50.

is the theological significance of these elements of an ecclesial nature which exist among the separated communities? Thils first establishes the possibility and validity of their existence outside the Church. He follows the distinction made by Dumont[21] between an essential and an accidental perfection of the Church. An essential perfection includes the possession of all elements necessary for its indefectible nature. Thus it cannot become blemished: it does not admit of any degree of perfection. An accidental perfection concerns the manner in which each of these elements find themselves effectively realized in the concrete life of the Church. There is room here for an infinite diversity and for degrees and modes of existence. Elements of the Church existing among the separated communities, then, contain something essential to the one Church of Christ. The supreme pontiffs, especially since Leo XIII, have recognized the existence of these genuine Christian elements among the separated communities. Thils notes that today the ecclesial reality of baptism which the majority of the separated Christians receive is particularly emphasized.[22]

In spite of these living Christian realities among the separated communities the Catholic Church remains the unique institution of salvation founded by Christ. Thils classifies the means of grace possessed by the Church according to the three offices exercised ministerially

---

[21]Cf. C. Dumont, op. cit., 78-82.

[22]G. Thils, op. cit., 251-56.

by the Church. They are: (1) the sacerdotal office with the seven sacraments, (2) the ministerial office with the varied ministry of the people of God, and (3) the jurisdictional office with all the pastoral direction of the faithful. Now the totality of these means of salvation form the apostolic institution in its integrity which is the Roman Catholic Church. However, one must well understand the import of the word integrity. It does not signify perfection from every point of view. Thus one can possess an element of the Church but neglect it, and so its role is only imperfectly realized. Thils gives the example of a validly ordained priest who fails to exercise his ministry.

From this understanding of the elements of the Church the significance of their existence outside the Church becomes clear. It is likewise evident that the Church, while possessing the fullness of means to salvation, does not possess these elements in the fullness of their perfection. In other words integrity does not necessarily imply perfection.

Now these elements of the Church, Thils says, can at times be disassociated from all that which constitutes the Catholic Church. One can possess some of them without possessing others. Certainly, it is not the normal situation, but the partial possession can be real and important. Thils cites baptism and the effects accomplished among those who have validly received this sacrament. Further these elements create among those who possess them a certain communion. Thus baptism

constitutes the separated communities as real but imperfect realizations of the Church.

Finally, Thils observes, these elements of the Church, by themselves, tend toward a fuller achievement. They are not some fixed, material, static reality. They are living, spiritual values, which tend in permanence to their fulfillment in the Catholic plenitude. It is through the action of the Holy Spirit that they exist and are drawn to their authentic end. Because of their supernatural reality, Thils remarks, they should be regarded as aspects d'Eglise rather than vestiges of the Church.[23] As far as the ecclesial significance of the elements present among the separated communities Thils raises the following questions. To what degree does their presence constitute a partial reality of the Church? What is their intrinsic value?

In an article written in 1962, Thils comments more specifically on the ecclesial significance of these elements. Because the separated communities have preserved these elements they are means of salvation for their members. Moreover, through the valid reception of baptism they are brought into a real but incomplete communion with the Church of Christ. Through these elements, sustained by the grace of the Holy Spirit, these communities perform actions of an ecclesial nature. They cannot be called Church, however, because they have not preserved the

---

[23] Ibid., 256-59.

integral possession of these elements. Nevertheless, according to Thils, they do possess a certain ecclesial reality.[24]

b) The Relation of the Elements to the Notes of the Church

The existence of the elements of the Church among the separated communities while accounting for their ecclesial reality in no way suggests a multiplicity of Churches. Thils makes it clear that the essential perfection of unity of faith and government is found only in the one Church of Christ. Hence the separated communities exercise in an incomplete fashion functions of the Church for their people. The grace they distribute and the unity they form is not separate from, but joined to, the unity of the one Church. Far from suggesting a splintering of the Church, recognition of the elements outside the Church is quite compatible with the note of Catholicity. For by Catholicity one understands that the Church embraces all men as well as all nations. The Church transcends social, economic, political, and cultural conditions. By its Catholicity the Church is meant to be not only open to all but habitable for all. Thus Catholicity demands a marvelous variety of rites, prayers, spiritualities, theological and philosophical systems, etc. By the grace of God, then, this diversity ought to be received, expanded, nourished and achieved in the house of God. Thils notes that the Church has always encouraged and cherished this diversity inherent in an authentic Catholicity.

---

[24]Cf. G. Thils, "Chrétiens Séparés et 'éléments' d'Église," Collectanea Mechliniensia, 47 (1962), 470-75.

Such an understanding of the Church's Catholicity finds particular application when one considers the elements of the Church existing among the separated communities. One is encouraged to discover there genuine forms of the Christian life. These elements are in fact imperfect realizations of the Church's catholicity. For this reason the Church should integrate into its very unity, the plurality of forms and diversity of Christian life in the matters of rite, piety, theology, etc., which are present in the separated communities on condition that they be legitimate. In this manner, says Thils, the Catholic Church will become more perfectly Catholic in its concrete life and so more truly habitable for all. It does not suffice to say that a Christian upon his reception in the Church need not reject what was good in his own community. It is necessary that the baptized non-Catholic truly feel at home. This will be possible when he finds there already actualized the legitimate forms of the Christian life which were dear to him in his separated community.

For Thils one of the major propositions of ecumenism consists precisely in this actualization of the Church's catholicity. Consequently, the elements of the Church present among the separated communities takes on greater significance in view of the Church's catholicity.[25] The fact is that the Church does not yet possess the perfection of Catholicity. Thus, the need to embrace, foster, and pray for

---

[25]Cf. G. Thils, op. cit., 239-46, 259-75.

the development of this property as found in the separated communities. For it is in the one Church of Christ that they will find their perfection. According to Thils these elements account for the ecclesial reality of the separated communities, but further study is required to determine the exact theological status of these communities.

3. J. Gribomont

The theory of ecclesial reality advanced by Gribomont applies principally to the Eastern Orthodox Churches. However, it is necessary to understand it, since it has been applied by Thomas Sartory and Walter Kasper to the separated communities of the West. The work of Gribomont in this field is rather unique in that he has developed this question independently of the other ecumenical theologians. His starting point is a critical analysis of the various attempts made by theologians to reconcile the membership of the separated Christians with the teaching of the encyclical Mystici Corporis. Common among all of these approaches is a certain distinction between the body of the Church and the soul, the mystical Body of Christ and the Church, or membership in a strict sense and 'belonging' loosely defined. The weakness in all of these theories, according to Gribomont, is an apparent and at times real opposition between the invisible reality of the Church and its visible expression. In order to show the compatibility, between these two Gribomont examines the question of the ecclesial reality of the

separated communities according to the principles of sacramental theology.[26]

The theological view which shows the harmony between the two scales of membership, visible and invisible, is that which considers the Church as the major sacrament. Now according to sacramental theology the invisible and visible orders are expressed by the terms res and sacramentum. The res or grace of the sacrament seeks to express itself in the visible order. The sacramentum or external rite, in turn, demands to effect in the invisible order what is signified visibly. Gribomont notes that the invisible order is not just a state of mind, rather it is on the plane of the most profound ontological reality. It is at the base of our conduct although one cannot directly be conscious of this reality. This point cannot be overstressed for the membership of the separated Christian is for the most part in the invisible order.

Since the Church is incarnate in a world of sin and ignorance the res and sacramentum are never fully identifiable. Thus a tension is created between the res and sacramentum with the result that both are not always fully realized. Because of this tension theology has elaborated a doctrine of substitution to explain how the res can be received without the sacramentum. Thus desire substitutes for the sacramentum when the reception of the sacrament is prevented by a grave obstacle.

---

[26]Cf. J. Gribomont, "Du sacrement de l'Église et de ses realisations imparfaites," Irenikon 22 (1949), 345-51.

Now considering the Church analogously as sacrament Gribomont would say that the separated Christian is a member of the Church according to the res of the Church. That is, he professes faith in Christ, receives communication of glory and so really belongs to the Body of Christ. One who is a member according to Mystici Corporis is a sacramental member. That is, he is a full member receiving the res and sacramentum. There is, he notes, a quasi identity between the res and sacramentum. One calls forth the other. They will only be totally identified in the heavenly Church. In the meantime one who is not a member on the sacramental plane, because he does not fulfill the conditions of the encyclical, can nevertheless be a member on the real plane from an analogical point of view. Thus for Gribomont to be a member of the Church in re is to be a member through grace in the invisible order. A member in sacramento is a member in the visible order following the terminology of the res and sacramentum.

Gribomont sees an intimate and vital connection between all of the sacramental signs. They are not isolated parts but rather each one is essentially joined together. To assert one of the signs is to assert all of them as Christ said "he who is not with me, is against me." These signs are then organically dependent on one another. Thus the separated Christians who reject certain sign values or visible elements in the Church, in fact preserve them in some imperfect way through the lesser sign values they maintain. Gribomont concludes that something of the visible character of the Church is preserved among the separated

Christians. Through their profession of fidelity to Christ and His will there is implied objectively a will for unity and apostolicity. This gives them a visible line, albeit imperfect, with the Church.

Gribomont notes that one cannot limit this discussion to individuals for here we are speaking on the social level, the level of signs. Hence the faith professed by the separated Christian is done so in a community and received in a community. Congar has objected that one cannot consider membership of a community in the Church since one cannot speak of the good faith of the community. Gribomont replies that it is not just a question of good faith constituting membership. The imperfect visible membership he refers to is based on the organic connection of the element of sacrament with its totality in the Catholic Church. Thus the Church as Sacrament can be realized in an imperfect, visible way in the element of Church present in the community outside the visible communion of the Church. This element of Church is part of, in fact, belongs to the Church. Thus there is established some imperfect belonging or churchly character by way of analogy of the sacraments.

It is true that the separated community lacks the nature of a person of which one can say it is in good faith. Nevertheless, it is responsible or judged by its actions. Thus one can say it is in heresy. Now a community can contradict itself in its actions. But recalling that there is an organic dependence of elements of sacrament for each other it must be true that the community which preserves one element,

while rejecting another, actually holds on to all without perceiving it. Therefore, while remaining heretical the separated community keeps an imperfect bond with the Church. Thus while abolotion of certain elements of the Church has harmed others which were kept, nevertheless, that which is held has preserved implicitly something of that which was denied.

This will, poorly expressed, escapes any attempt of man to understand it. At the same time there is present the ecclesial value of the community rising up under the action of the Holy Spirit. Thus a separated community which breaks with Catholic unity but conserves all of the exterior forms (sacramentum tantum), places an obex which prevents the community from being what it should be--a member of the body of Christ. But, Gribomont states, one has to admit that it preserves a supernatural value as an effect of the sacrament which constitutes it. This value consecrates the society, removing it from the world of the profane.[27]

From the analogy of the Church as a sacrament, then, Gribomont states that one must grant a certain ecclesial character to the separated communities. While they have not preserved the sacramentum they do have something of the res which is sufficient to constitute their imperfect realization of the Church. Moreover, the res of the sacrament is a real ontological reality which, while remaining invisible,

---

[27]Cf. ibid., 351-67.

establishes a bond with the sacramentum. Hence the separated community is brought into a real bond of union with the Catholic Church.

4. Thomas Sartory

We have already seen in the first chapter that Sartory argues for an imperfect membership in the Church for the separated Christian. Now since ecumenism deals with communities and not individuals, he considers the problem of the ecclesial status of the separated communities as such. Sartory searches for an ontological reality within the separated community which might serve as a basis for their ecclesial character. Like Thils, he finds this basis in the vestigia ecclesiae. But Sartory progresses further than Thils in that he answers many of the questions raised by the latter concerning the theological significance of the elements of the Church found among the separated communities. Finally, he applies the analogy of the Church as sacrament developed by Gribomont to the separated communities of the West. In the vestigia ecclesiae Sartory discovers the res of the sacrament which Gribomont refers to and thus a basis for their ecclesial reality. In concluding his theological view Sartory explains that the ultimate difference between the Catholic Church and the separated communities is a difference of being. Thus the vestigia ecclesiae do not constitute the separated communities as another Church, but rather a participation in the being of the one Church of Christ. We will examine now in detail the theory proposed by Sartory.

a) Vestigia ecclesiae

According to Sartory the vestigia ecclesiae refer to the elements of the true Church found among the separated communities. He credits Pope Pius XI with signaling the way for a positive approach to the study of the vestigia. In an allocution to the Eastern Churches January 9, 1927, the Pontiff said, "those parts that have separated from an auriferous rock themselves contain gold."[28] This statement gave ecumenical theology a task and a goal. The ecumenist must search out the positive elements present among the separated Christians and use them to foster the reunion of Christendom.

It is obvious, Sartory notes, that the Protestants whether at the reformation or the present do not give the same value to the vestigia as we do. In fact, they can have a pejorative meaning among the separated Christians as they do among Catholics. However, regardless of what the separated Christians may think of the vestigia ecclesiae one should consider them from a Catholic point of view. It is a question of ontological being which persists in spite of one's view. They can be lessened or deminished, but they cannot be destroyed. Thus even though these vestigia are separated from the Church they still retain their authentic Christian values. For these vestiges of the Church are precisely elements of a specifically ecclesial nature.

---

[28]Pope Pius XI, AAS.

Sartory is primarily concerned with those elements which are part of the means of grace. Objectively considered the means of grace constitute the Church as a visible institution. Now part of these means can continue to exist apart from the Church and perform the same function there as in the Church. Thus they can effect and mediate grace. They can and do bring the members of the separated communities to Christ. According to Sartory the primary elements of the one Chruch found among these communities are: (1) Jesus Christ, (2) Action of the Holy Spirit, (3) Baptism, and (4) the Word of God.[29]

(1) Jesus Christ

As Christology and ecclesiology are inseparable the Church is found where Christ is found. However, faith in Jesus Christ is not the same for separated Christians as it is for Catholics. The separated Christians have emphasized the soteriological aspect of Christ, considering only the role of the glorified Christ. Very little stress is placed upon the humanity of Christ. Consequently, of the two presences of Christ in the Church, His real spiritual presence through faith and His substantial presence through the Eucharist, the separated communities have preserved only the former.

When the separated community celebrates the Eucharist one cannot speak of a <u>vestigium ecclesiae</u> in terms of a fragment of reality for

---

[29]Cf. T. Sartory, <u>The Ecumenical Movement And The Unity Of The Churches</u>, 156-59.

here there is no part of a real presence or imperfect realization of a real presence. Rather, what one has is a unique image or appearance of a reality. This, Sartory remarks, is not nothing or without value. It has a psychological value in that it directs the participants toward the real plentitude. Sartory agrees with the Swiss theologian, Otto Karrer, who states that faith in the presence and communion of Christ in the Eucharist among the separated Christians is something more than merely a subjective state of mind.

Sartory concludes that the separated communities have preserved a genuine vestigium ecclesiae by their faith in Jesus Christ. However, it is a very imperfect vestigium as their faith does not embrace the whole Christ as its object.[30]

(2) Action of the Holy Spirit

The separated communities do not consider the Holy Spirit in terms of embodiment as the Catholics do. Thus the Church envisions the Holy Spirit coming into history and remaining in the Church, dwelling in the individual as well as the Church, guiding and inspiring it. The separated communities have generally ascribed a docetic role to the Holy Spirit although many do admit of the objective manifestations of His work in the sacraments and the ministry of the Church.

Now the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth who sanctifies members in the Church. Therefore, His presence will be verified in the

---

[30]Cf. ibid., 159-80.

separated communities to the extent that they have preserved genuine elements of the ministry. This is, Sartory notes, a question of the community's possession of a vestigium ecclesiae and not a matter of an individual's good faith. According to Leo XIII the Anglican orders have been declared invalid. This is not the same, Sartory says, as declaring their orders ineffective. Hence one can consider the ministry in the other separated communities as well as a vestigium ecclesiae. Now through baptism members of these communities are joined to the mystical Body of Christ, however imperfectly and incompletely. At the same time they are given a part in the universal priesthood of Christ. Based on this universal priesthood their ministry possesses a true spiritual reality. However, this reality is a part of the prophetic order in the Church and not the apostolic order. The prophetic order is subject to the teaching power in the Church which guarantees its authenticity. For this reason the ministry of the separated communities while possessing a true spiritual reality as part of the prophetic order lacks the guarantee of authenticity.

Thus Sartory states that the separated communities lack the fullness of the ministry and so the fullness of the Holy Spirit objectified in it. Their ministry does contain a particle of reality which can only be perfected in the one Church of Christ. Since the sacraments are evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit, His action among the separated communities is a genuine vestigium ecclesiae.[31]

---

[31]Cf. ibid., 180-203.

(3) Baptism

Through baptism these communities are joined to Christ, to the Church, and to their fellow Christians. Although the union effected with the Church is incomplete and imperfect it is nonetheless real. Since the Church itself is engaged in the act of baptism it is present when baptism is administered even in the separated community. Baptism is, then, a true vestigium ecclesiae which gives expression to the ecclesial reality of the separated community. Sartory notes that baptism is only a vestigium because it is just the beginning of the incorporating action performed by the Church.[32]

(4) The Word of God.

The Word of God necessarily involves the concept of revelation. One can speak of revelation in terms of God speaking (active), and in terms of someone bearing witness to God's Word (passive). Thus for Catholics "the Word of God comes to us in the form of the apostolic witness and reaches man by way of historical tradition as depositum fidei."[33] The separated Christians have overlooked the historical fact of the Word of God and adhere to the Word immediately. Thus they consider the Word as an act of God which need not be considered in the historical form it took in the early Church. The separated communities do, however, hold on to the Sacred Scriptures and thus have

---

[32]Cf. ibid., 208-09.

[33]Cf. ibid., 212.

preserved the Word of God. Here too we find a genuine though fragmentary reality of the one Church present among the separated communities.[34]

b) Ecclesial Reality of the Separated Communities

The doctrine of the vestigia ecclesiae as exposed by Sartory raises the question of the ecclesial reality of the separated communities. If in fact these communities possess genuine elements of the one Church, then one is logically led to ask to what degree these elements constitute them as churches. Sartory sees in the vestigia ecclesiae a stronger reason for raising the question with regard to the community than with the individual. The question of the separated Christian involves the subjective good faith of the individual which is in the moral order. When speaking of the separated community, however, it is a question of the objective ontic reality they possess because of the vestigia. Thus Sartory asks "whether these dissident communities do not share in a graduated ecclesiastical being (kirchliches sein) similar to that of individuals."[35]

Sartory's response is in the affirmative. The separated Christian communities definitely possess a certain ecclesial character. The theological foundation for this ecclesial character are the vestigia ecclesiae. By borrowing Gribomont's analogy of the Church as sacrament and

---

[34]Cf. ibid., 210-14.

[35]Cf. ibid., 214.

applying it to the vestigia ecclesiae Sartory answers the question raised by Thils concerning the theological significance of the elements of the Church. These vestigia are organically connected with the plentitude of the means of grace possessed by the Church. While they are imperfect and incomplete they are capable of constituting an imperfect realization of the Church as sacrament. Now the Catholic Church is recognized as the one Church founded by Jesus Christ from its constitutive elements which traditionally have been termed unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity. Granted the separated communities do not substantially possess any of these notes, nevertheless Sartory states, the elements they have preserved to constitute partes potentiales of these notes which give rise to the ecclesial character of their communities.[36]

5. Gregory Baum

It is in his doctoral thesis published in 1958, that Baum first exposed his views on the ecclesial reality of the separated communities. At that time he sought a theological basis for their character as Church in the documents of the magisterium. Since the Second Vatican Council however, his original thesis has undergone a certain development. In his more recent writings one sees that he founds the ecclesial reality upon the theology of the local Church. We will consider his development of the question in this order.

---

[36]Cf. ibid., 214-19.

a) The Magisterium As Basis for Ecclesial Reality

Through his study of the papal documents from Leo XIII to Pius XII, Baum discovers a patrimony of grace which has been preserved among the separated communities. These Christians do not receive their faith as by chance from the living Spirit, but rather they receive grace in the community in which they live. They are vessels of salvation.

(1) Christian Patrimony of an Ecclesial Nature

The first and most important patrimony of grace preserved among the separated communities is the sacrament of baptism. The importance of baptism as stressed by the Church along with the explicit recognition of its presence in the separated communities shows that they have preserved something of the sacramental life of the Church. He notes that this sacrament is not properly the possession of the separated Christians, but rather an element inherited from the Catholic Church. It is important to note that Baum cites pontifical documents which acknowledge the presence of valid baptism among the separated Christians. But while he refers to the papal sources to show that these communities are means of salvation he does not cite any explicit statement of the popes to this effect. That these communities are means of salvation must be regarded as an explication by Baum of the papal teaching regarding the existence of baptism outside the Church.

Secondly, the separated Christians have preserved the virtue of faith. Indeed, Baum says, according to papal teaching they receive

this faith within their communities. Once again we would have to say that this is at most implicit in the sources cited by Baum. At any rate, Baum states that the separated Christians receive their faith from a visible structure as we do through the Church. Thus the separated Christian receives his faith by adhering to the Word of revelation as brought to him in the Sacred Scriptures by his "Church." Therefore, Baum observes, his community mediates at least materially the sufficient credibility for faith in the Word made flesh by teaching that the Bible is the book of salvation. Thus the faith which is brought to the separated Christian is brought to him within the framework Christ established for men to believe in Him. Once again this is an element of the Church preserved in the separated commuunity through which the means of salvation are conferred.[37]

What was said above about the separated communities preserving something of the sacramental life and bringing faith to their members presupposes the good faith of the separated Christian. Baum searches the papal documents to see if the popes acknowledge good faith in the separated Christians. He finds only four explicit statements to this effect. However, he notes, this seemingly small witness is bolstered by the fact that the Roman documents constantly refer to the separated Christians as fratres dissidentes. Since heretics and schismatics can-

---

[37]Cf. G. Baum, That They May Be One, 33-46.

not be considered as brothers the foregoing appelation presupposes good faith on the part of the separated Christian.

Now Baum concludes from the Christian goods possessed by these communities that these people do have access to the faith and possess it in some degree outside the Catholic Church. This raises the theological problem of division within the one indivisible faith. That is, how does one explain that the virtue of faith can exist among those who do not join the full Catholic profession? Baum notes that we would not be faithful to the teaching of the documents were we not to mention the negative side of the inheritance existing among the separated communities. The papal documents emphasize that the separated Christians possess the seeds of destruction as well as genuine Christian elements. This is not meant to imply that the two exist whole and entire side by side. The fact is, the two seeds, that of error and that of Christian patrimony, are inexorably linked in their historical situation. These two traditions may form a psychological unity, but nevertheless, even the Christian faith they have must be colored in some way by the tension between these two opposing principles.

Now since the faith of the separated Christian is in varying degrees tainted by error it continues to survive because it effects an implicit belief in the many truths not formally accepted. Thus the faith which the separated Christian has must be substantially the Catholic Faith. It is, however, an undeveloped faith, one wherein his position prevents him from explicitly accepting all of revealed

truth in the manner in which a Catholic receives them. The fact that this faith exists or perhaps is mixed with false principles is no obstacle since this does not destroy the virtue of faith. On the part of the subject there may be confusion, but faith can never have error as its object. So implicitly only what is of Christian faith is believed with faith.

Having established the authenticity of his faith Baum asks how the Christian faith of the separated Christian relates him to the Catholic Church? Aside from the Catholic Church there is no communion with Christ. Baum notes that this is clear in the New Testament. Thus wherever communion with Christ is established through the Spirit there must be the Church. The separated Christians, Baum concludes, enjoy the Christian faith and hence must belong to the Church in some incomplete way. From the official documents of the Church this complex relationship of the separated Christian with the Church is revealed.

Regarding the separated Christians Baum says that they are definitely members of the Church, albeit not in the manner taught by Mystici Corporis. They are members by reason of the Christian patrimony which they have preserved. Foremost among this patrimony is the sacrament of baptism which incorporates them into the body of Christ. Secondly, by reason of their faith in Jesus Christ they are at least partially visibly related to the Church. Thus in both cases their

membership *in voto* is reducible to an *in re* membership because it is visibly expressed through observable elements which they have preserved.[38]

(2) Separated Communities Approximate Church Through Christian Patrimony

Baum distinguishes between the patrimony of grace surviving in the separated community and the separated community in which it is alive. The isolated patrimony in terms of theology is easily defined. It can be defined as the totality of the means of grace and its effects surviving in the separated communities. However, historically, this patrimony is combined with beliefs of a contradictory nature if not to the patrimony itself, to other truths to which the patrimony belongs. Baum notes that because these two currents live together in a certain historical unity it is difficult theologically to assess the nature of the separated community.

In a certain sense, Baum says, the separated communities are mysterious. He uses this word to distinguish them from an ordinary social organization. He does not call them Church, but he makes it quite clear that they are more than just a multitude of baptized Christians. The mystery is that these communities are responsible for spreading the kingdom of Christ as well as distorting His message. Except for them many people would never come to have faith in Christ. Thus Baum says

---

[38]Cf. *ibid*., 47-64.

one cannot simply regard them as non-Church. They are a "social structure responsible both for the impediments to and the presence of a divine tradition."[39] Thus while these means of grace belong to the Catholic Church, historically in certain areas they are only available in the separated community.

Baum observes that the Christian patrimony preserved among the separated communities produces in them two distinct properties of an ecclesial nature: (1) the elements preserved bring the possibility of salvation to their members, (2) the same elements are society building in their community. Thus baptism tends to transform the collection of men into an organized society. Even that community which possesses the minimum of means necessary for salvation cannot be regarded as a society transmitting error from generation to generation. Because of its patrimony it must be seen as a society which preserves and passes on to its members part of the authentic Christian tradition.

From the foregoing description of the separated Christians and their communities Baum concludes that they definitely possess elements of an ecclesial nature. Moreover, these communities by means of their Christian patrimony approximate the soteriological function of the Church. However, theologically speaking they cannot be called Church because they lack the fullness of means to salvation by which the Church of Christ is identified.[40]

---

[39] Ibid., 67.

[40] Cf. ibid., 65-72.

b) Theology of Local Church As A Basis for Ecclesial Reality[41]

Baum's first attempt to establish the ecclesial reality of the separated communities by an analogy with the theology of the local Church proceeds no further than to proclaim them as supernatural realities. They are not ordinary communities, nor merely collections of individuals, "but Christian communions in which means of grace are available to men and corporate worship is offered to God."[42]

According to Baum the local Church is created in each community through the celebration of baptism and, more especially, the confection of the Eucharist by the bishop and his priests. Christ renews his covenant with His people and joins them with all people of His covenant. Thus, Baum says, the local Church is not simply a part of the universal Church, it is in fact the incarnation of the universal Church in a particular place. Now to ask whether the separated communities are "Churches" is not to ask whether they duplicate the character or are similar to the one Roman, Catholic and Apostolic Church. This would be contrary to the very nature of the Church. To question the ecclesial reality of the separated communities, then, is to ask if these communities theologically resemble the local Church to the extent that they might be called Church.

---

[41]It should be noted that Baum's latest approach to the question of ecclesial reality presented here was developed after the Constitution on the Church and the Decree on Ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council appeared.

[42]G. Baum, ed., "What Are Other Churches?" Ecumenical Theology Today, 53.

Pope Paul, Baum observes, in addressing the observers at the Second Vatican Council acknowledges the separated communities as communions which believe in Christ and receive His baptism. This, Baum states, is a recognition of some supernatural character. However, the Catholic Church has never acknowledged the eucharistic celebrations of these communities as valid. Because they lack a valid eucharist these communities cannot be equated with the local Church. Nevertheless, they must not be equated with profane or secular societies. While their institutional means may be defective, they are, considering their foundation in the authentic gospel, Christian communities of a supernatural nature. The proclamation of God's kingdom, the celebration of baptism, and the eucharistic signs proclaimed in these communities constitute their supernatural character. Consequently, they are instruments, albeit imperfect, used by God to bring salvation to men. The elements of Church alone, however, are not sufficient to constitute them as a local Church. Thus, Baum states, the Church is only present when baptism and the eucharist are celebrated.[43]

With the publication of the Decree on Ecumenism and the Constitution of theChurch of the Second Vatican Council Baum sets aside his reluctance to grant the separated communities an ecclesial reality based upon their similarity to the local Church. He cites the Constitution on the Church as proof that the magisterium considers the local congregation as a concrete realization of the entire mystery which is

---

[43]Cf. ibid., 47-54.

the Church.[44] He says that one better understands the nature of the Church on this level than on the level of the universal Church.

To view the separated communities from their institutional, structural aspect, Baum indicates, is only one method of judging their ecclesial reality. An equally, if not more important criterion, is the degree to which the community lives because of the graces mediated by those visibly preserved means of grace. From his own study of the Second Vatican Council he concludes that the preaching of the gospel and participation in the eucharist by the local congregation are more eminently constitutive of ecclesial reality. For they establish a bond of fellowship, of unity. They transform a community, called to be God's people, into the people of God.

> If, therefore, a local congregation belonging to the separated communities listens faithfully to the Gospel, shares in the breaking of the bread of unity, and behaves as a living fellowship, then we must say on the basis of the theology of the local Church we have just examined that it is Church, even if we regret the institutional imperfections from which it suffers.[45]

Baum further notes that because of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, as he understands it, it is conceivable that a community separated from Rome might realize the Church of Christ more than a Church in communion with Rome. He bases this on the fact that the Council

---

[44]Cf. G. Baum, The Constitution On The Church Of Vatican Council II, 22. Baum's commentary found in this work has been reprinted in JES 2 (1965), 1-30.

[45]G. Baum, "The Ecclesial Reality of the Other Churches," Concilium 4 (1965), 44.

presents the Catholic Church as the 'institutionally' perfect realization of the Church of Christ. However, on that level of community in which the members are united by love of Christ there is the possibility of sin and imperfection as well as charity and unity even for the Catholic Church. On this level, then, a separated community may be more perfectly united to Christ. Thus it may possess more ecclesial reality.

This interpretation is justified, he says, from section 14 of the Constitution on the Church which states: "They (the Catholic faithful) are fully incorporated in the society of the Church who, having the Spirit of Christ, accept her entire system and all the means of salvation given to her, and are united with her as part of her visible bodily structure and through her with Christ, who rules her through the supreme pontiff and the bishops."[46] From this statement Baum concludes that the separated Christians can enjoy a less than plene incorporation which will be more fruitful than the Catholic who is not joined to the Spirit of Christ.[47]

---

[46]"Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," The Documents of Vatican II, 33. AAS (1965), 5.

[47]G. Baum, "The Ecclesial Reality of the Other Churches," Concilium 4 (1965), 41-45. It seems to this writer that Baum has overstepped the implications of the teaching in the Constitution on the Church. That the separated community possess an ecclesial reality can undoubtedly be supported by the Council. But that they might possess more reality than the Church is evidently Baum's theological conclusion and not the Council's. He seems to forget all of the unknown factors involved.

6. Walter Kasper

Kasper states that the question of the ecclesial character of the separated communities presents at the moment one of the central problems of ecumenism. It is a problem for which no easy solution can be found. Moreover, the lack of any formal Church dogma concerning this question makes it more difficult to treat. It is true, he notes, that many attempts have been made to establish some sort of membership for the separated Christian. However, the separated communities present a distinct problem, and the attention given to the separated Christians as individuals has at times tended to obscure the reality of these communities. If one does not wish to overlook historical reality, therefore, one must question the ecclesial status of the separated community itself.[48]

There is a tension in these communities between the genuine Christian elements and the principles of dissent. He draws a further invalid conclusion from the Decree on Ecumenism. Here he cites the decree's comment on the presence of the Lord's supper in the separated communities as sufficient presence for a unity building element. (Cf. ibid., 46.) Actually the decree merely states that there is ground for dialogue based on the fact that these communities commemorate the Lord's Supper and "profess that it signifies life in communion with Christ." ("Decree on Ecumenism," The Documents of Vatican II, 364. AAS (1965), 90.) Baum, however, concludes that this belief is sufficient to constitute the unity forming power which we say is proper to the sacrament of the eucharist. On this fact he states that the separated community can be compared analogously to the local Church.

[48]Cf. W. Kasper, "Der Ekklesiologische Charakter Der Nichtkathlischen Kirchen," Theologische Quartalschrift 145 (1965), 42-48.

Kasper notes that recent Catholic theology has rediscovered the positive value of the vestigia ecclesiae. It views them as authentic Christian values, which belong to the Church and appear in the separated communities. Here one is concerned not with any Christian value, but with values of an ecclesial nature such as the proclamation of the Word, baptism, and forms of the ministry. In addition to the vestigia ecclesiae Kasper cites further recent developments in theology which have shed new light on the separated communities. Thus the new emphasis on the historical view of the Church as the people of God, and the eschatological aspect of the Church's catholicity which understands the unity and fullness of the Church as a present gift and also as an exercise, a new event which will only be realized when God will be all in all. This implies that the Church can never be completely viewed only in its structure; it must be considered as well from its purpose and mission.

Now taking all of these views together Kasper observes that the Church does not simply exist. It is continually new and continually venturing; it is always in via, a pilgriming Church. This historical view permits a correct theological classification of the divisions. They are signs that the Church is still on its way. At the same time one cannot theologically justify them.[49]

Contemporary studies in ecclesiology make it clear that the Church is not a simple power capable of one interpretation. It is

---

[49]Cf. ibid., 49-55.

visible and hidden at the same time, present and coming, existing in the interval between "already" and "not yet". The eschatological character of the Church claims that no one of the existent Church images can simply be complete. What is certain is that the Church must be everywhere in some way whenever the sovereignty of Christ becomes in Word and Sacramental signs a powerful event. Constituting the essence of the Church is, therefore, the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments as well as the rendering of service through the ministry which accomplishes Word and sacrament in the mission of Christ.

Expressed in terms of Catholic theology these elements are of a sacramental kind. Thus the Church itself is a symbolic, sacramental power. Analogous to the individual sacraments, the Church differentiates between the dimension of the sign (sacramentum tantum) and the symbolic reality of grace (res sacramenti). Likewise one must differentiate the validity and fruitfulness of the sacrament. The visible sign of the sacrament can be determined, but this is no guarantee that the res sacramenti is present. Thus all of the conditions for Church membership may be present, but because of a faulty disposition in the individual, he may be lacking fruitful membership. It is also true that the inner life of the Church may be present because of a votum sacramenti without the outward sign being posited.

According to the sacramental dimensions, the ecclesial status of the membership of the separated Christian and the ecclesial reality of his community is established. Kasper acknowledges his dependence here

on the theory advanced by Gribomont. Thus with regard to the res sacramenti, Kasper states, the separated community can represent the Church in its full sense, if Christ is signified in it as in signs. These communities do not represent the sacramentum tantum, however, on the same plane as the Catholic Church.

The churchly status of the separated community must be judged not only according to the sacramental dimension, but also according to the different possible levels of sacramental symbolism. Around the two major sacraments, baptism and eucharist, all the other sacraments are grouped. Basically, one cannot admit to one without admitting to all of them. The same is true as regards the object of the act of faith. The act of faith depends ultimately not on a formula, but on the reality signified in the formula. Thus by acknowledging Jesus Christ as God and Savior one implicitly accepts all of the truths He came to reveal. When one judges the ministry of the separated communities against these truths one must speak of a votum and a vestigium ordinis within them, since the separated communities know one ministry which is not understood simply as a democratic delegation from below, but as a divine fullness of power from above.

Kasper states that the separated communities must be considered not merely as potential or virtual churches, but as churches already in the process of being built because there is effected in them something of the oikodome in the sense of the New Testament. In this sense he would refer to them as incompleted local Churches. There is

in fact no great difference whether one gives these separated communities the title Church--from a Catholic standpoint this can only be used in an analogous sense--or whether one calls them ecclesial communities. Of much more importance, according to Kasper, is a basically new theological view of the relationship of the Church and the churches, a view which will observe this relationship not just as being purely static and juridical, but as a dynamic and salvific historico-eschatological one (dynamisch und heilsgeschichtlich-eschatologisch). Thus unity will lie not in the mutual absorption nor in the mere integration of the individual churches but in the continuing conversion of all.[50]

7. Heinrich Fries

If the separated communities possess an ecclesial reality, it must be because they share in some way in the essential structure of the Church. To discover this reality if any Fries compares the structure of separated community to that of the Catholic Church.

He notes that the separated communities have a common origin with the Catholic Church. They share in the revelation and salvation history completed in and with Jesus Christ, the heritage coming from Him, and the task of bearing witness and preaching given by Him. Sacred Scripture joins these communities to apostolic times. Further, they live from the source of the Sacred Scriptures and the early creeds of

---

[50]Cf. ibid., 56-62.

the Church as well as the early councils which are an authentic interpretation of scripture.

These communities retain also the 'depositum' of the early apostolic belief together with the recognition of the Church which had this understanding. They have preserved in addition the riches of Christian prayer and liturgy, and the theological understanding of the faith, as well as the sacrament of faith. Their ecclesiological status in Catholic perspeective is, then, participation in a common possession.[51]

Such a description, Fries notes, is not complete. The separated communities are described not only by what they have in common with us, but also according to those principles which are opposed to the Catholic faith.

The decision made by the reformers has great importance in reference to ecclesiological problems. It concerns the problem of apostolic tradition and succession as the norm of faith and authority for the existence of the Christian. It concerns whether or not the apostolic mission continues to exist in their community. It involves the Church as generative of salvation, as subject and bearer of faith which for its own sake has a structure and which for the sake of faith cannot abandon its structure.

---

[51]Cf. H. Fries, Aspects of the Church, 111-18. The section of this book dealing with the separated communities has been reprinted in JES 1 (1964), 195-212 and Theologische Zeitschrift 13 (1962), 85-98.

In describing the ecclesiological status of the separated communities we must keep in mind these two realities: the common possession and the differences. While these communities preserve many of the elements common to the one Church it must not be forgotten that the deed of the reformers caused a change in the structure of the Church and with this an interruption of historical continuity. Consequently, Fries grants an ecclesiological status to the separated communities inasmuch as they participate in the structure of the Church by means of the elements they have preserved. Since they have not retained these elements as they are structurally possessed by the Catholic Church the separated communities cannot be considered as a Church.[52]

Summary

The influence of Congar on the other theologians discussed in this chapter cannot be overestimated. His greatest contribution to the study of the separated communities, was perhaps, the recognition of the positive Christians elements which they possess. He was not satisfied, however, with merely pointing to their existence among the separated brethren. He met the challange of explaining the compatibility of the vestigia ecclesiae with Catholic doctrine. To this end Congar reexamined the note of catholicity in the Church. He discovered that the Church, while perfect in its essence, is perfectible in its concrete existence. Thus the genuine Christian elements existing

---

[52]Cf. ibid., 120-35.

among the separated communities will add to the perfection of the Church's catholicity. Thils and Sartory further developed this notion of catholicity as exposed by Congar.

Common to all of the above theological descriptions of the separated communities is a recognition of the importance of the vestigia ecclesiae. Each of the theologians attach great importance to the proper understanding of their significance as present among these communities. With the exception of Gribomont, Baum, and Kasper, the Christian elements of the Church present in the separated communities account in some way for their ecclesial status. Without exception all of the theologians grant an ecclesial reality to the separated community. They are likewise unanimous in the conviction that these communities do not fulfill the conditions necessary to be termed Church in the strict theological sense.

A certain perplexity can be noted in the writing of the above mentioned theologians. This anxiety, if you will, arises from the fact that each of these men is keenly aware of the true Christian life present among the separated communities, and yet each is at a loss to explain its real theological significance. They are not so much impressed with the number of elements preserved in these communities, but rather with the source and sustaining power of these elements which is the Holy Spirit. In many ways these communities carry on the salvific work of Christ and yet they cannot be called Church. Thus Baum, Kasper, and Gribomont speak of them as Church in an analogous way while

Congar, Thils, Sartory, and Fries consider them as imperfect realizations of the one Church. While no definitive statement can be drawn from any of their theories a certain amount of progress has been made. It remains now for the theologian with the aid of the magisterium, especially as reflected in the Second Vatican Council to gain new insights into the nature of the separated communities.

CHAPTER IV

VATICAN II AND THE QUESTION OF THE CHURCHLINESS OF THE SEPARATED COMMUNITIES OF THE WEST

A. Exposition of the Matter in the Council Documents

The climate of ecumenism was never so healthy as during the twenty years spanning the encyclical Mystici Corporis and the Second Vatican Council. If historians date the dawn of contemporary ecumenical activity from the second half of the nineteenth century, one would have to say that ecumenism has only begun to bear the day's heat. The day is just beginning; the real task lies ahead. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit Christians have been brought to this day. True, little has been realized in the way of actual reunion. However, the accomplishments of those ecumenical theologians who have made this day mutually acceptable for ecumenism cannot be overestimated. No one with a sense of history expects the goals of ecumenism to be achieved over night. In fact the sun may never set on this day, but in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council and the World Council of Churches, the work for Christian Unity will go on.

In the last chapter some of the advancements made by Catholic theologians in their consideration of the separated Christians were seen. These men spoke of the ecclesial reality of the separated

communities with a certain amount of timidity and hesitancy. That they were on uncertain ground is understandable from the fact that the magisterium had not spoken on these matters. In the Second Vatican Council we find the magisterium lucidly and candidly confronting this question. An examination of two of the documents from the Council will reveal the influence of the Catholic ecumenical theologians and the further development made by the Council Fathers themselves.

The Constitution on the Church and the Decree on Ecumenism are the two documents most immediately concerned with the question of the ecclesial reality of the separated communities. In a certain sense, however, the question of the other churches and the work of ecumenism was one that faced the Council Fathers each day they met. Sitting before them in a place of prominence were delegated observers and guests representing the major separated Christian churches of the world. Nor were they without influence in the drafting of the decrees of the Council and especially the Decree on Ecumenism. These observers may be said to have made the same contribution to the Council Fathers as the Ecumenical Movement in general made to the Catholic theologians in dialogue with the separated communities. That is to say, by their very presence the Council Fathers were made acutely aware of the scandal of the division and the need to give positive consideration to the Christian communities represented by these men.

1. The Constitution on the Church

The words of Pius XII in Humani Generis concerning the sources of revelation, "accedit quod uterque doctrinae divinitus revelatae fons tot tantosque continet thesauros veritatis, ut nunquam reapse exhauriatur"[1] find an appropriate application here. In the first two chapters of the Constitution the sources of revelation are reexamined furnishing new insights into the mystery of the Church as the mystical Body of Christ. It was Pius XII who enabled Catholic ecumenical theologians to come to a deeper understanding of the separated Christians. This resulted from his presentation of the ecclesial nature of the individual's union with Christ. The Constitution on the Church brings a further clarification of the mystery of the Church providing once more a point of departure for Catholic theologians to enrich their understanding of the separated communities. And it is by no means a coincidence that the Constitution, like the encyclical, explains the mystery of the life of the Church in terms of the Mystical Body, for the essence of the supernatural life of the Church is union with God the Father through Christ in His Spirit.

Chapter one of the Constitution begins by explaining the mystery of the Church in terms of God the Father's eternal plan to call all men to his own divine life through His Son, Jesus Christ. This call to the supernatural life is effected by Christ in His Church and is

---

[1]Pius XII, Humani Generis, AAS 42 (1950), 568.

bestowed through the Spirit of Christ whom He sent to enkindle this life of love and union with God the Father in the hearts of men.[2] Thus we see that the mystery of the Church abides first and foremost in the union of its members with the divine life of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This call to and bestowal of the supernatural life on men is the initiation of the Kingdom of God on earth made visible in the person of Jesus Christ and continued in the Church He founded. The Constitution points to the many beautiful biblical images used metaphorically to describe the nature of this Church.[3]

Of particular interest in our consideration is the Constitution's teaching on the Church as the mystical Body of Christ. Pius XII in his consideration of the Church as the mystical Body of Christ was primarily concerned with the social and juridical implications of this teaching. The Constitution, on the contrary, emphasizes first the interior spiritual communion existing among the members who have been constituted as Christ's mystical Body.[4] "In that body the life of Christ is poured into the believers who, through the sacraments, are united in a hidden and real way to Christ who suffered and was

---

[2]Constitutio Dogmatica de Ecclesia, AAS (1965), 5-71. Citations here will be to the W. Abbot ed., The Documents of Vatican II, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," 15-7.

[3]Ibid., 18-20.

[4]"By communicating His Spirit to His brothers, called together from all peoples, Christ made them mystically into His own body." Ibid., 20.

glorified."[5] Through baptism we become members of His body and in the Eucharist we partake of that same body whereby we are joined in union with Christ and with one another. In describing the life of this body which is the Church it is evident that the Constitution has in mind the local Church. This is obvious because the document speaks of the Church in terms of the communal life of its members and the means by which their life is fostered at the community level. Thus the Mystical Body according to the Constitution is primarily descriptive of the local community. In addition it summons to mind the hierarchical structure which sacramentally sustains the supernatural life of the Church.

Because the Constitution regards the term mystical Body as primarily indicative of the Church as a community united in Christ through His Spirit, it reaches an understanding of the Church which clarifies and develops the teaching of Mystici Corporis. The encyclical simply equated the mystical Body of Christ with the Roman Catholic Church since the mystical Body is made visible in the visible social body of the Church. The Constitution, however, while stating that the mystical Body and the Church are not distinct realities does not make a simple identification of the two. Thus while the mystical Body of Christ is identical with the Roman Catholic Church, it nevertheless transcends it. Consequently, concerning this relationship the Constitution states the following.

---

[5] Loc. cit.

> This Church constituted and organized in the world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in his communion, although many elements of sanctification and of truth may be found outside of its visible structure, which as gifts belonging to the Church of Christ, are forces impelling toward Catholic unity.[6]

For an ecumenical consideration of the separated communities this is perhaps the most significant statement of the first chapter of the Constitution. Since the mystical Body connotes the union of Christ with his believing subjects, it transcends the Church historically instituted by Him. Thus the Constitution implicitly acknowledges the possibility of imperfect realizations of Christ's Church existing outside the visible Roman Catholic Church. That which would constitute them as such is unmistakably described as elements of sanctification which belong by nature to the one Church of Christ.

In Chapter II of the Constitution those who are united in Christ's mystical Body are described as the "People of God." Once again following a similar pattern of development in ecclesiology after Mystici Corporis, the Council Fathers discuss the nature of the Church as the People of God. This People of God is one in Spirit with Israel of the Old Testament which was one in the flesh. The new people of God with Christ as their head have been born again in Christ through the Spirit and so now live as Sons of God. They are one, then, not only with Israel but with all men for Christ came to save all men. The

---

[6] Ibid., 23.

Constitution draws attention to the historical and eschatological nature of this People. While strengthened by the power of God's grace, they are, nevertheless, subject to the weakness of the flesh. And so, the Church moves through history remaining steadfast to Christ because of God's grace but not without fault.[7]

This People of God is bound together not only by the invisible bond of union with Christ, but also in a visible Communion in which is recognized the one Church founded by Him. While all men by reason of the salvific will of Christ are joined to this People, only those

> . . . are <u>fully</u> incorporated in the society of the Church who, having the Spirit of Christ, accept her entire system and all the means of salvation given to her, and are united with her as part of her visible bodily structure, and through her with Christ, who rules her through the supreme pontiff and the bishops.[8]

By using the word <u>fully</u> the Constitution deliberately allows for various degrees of belonging to the Church.

Indeed, it has already been seen that man by his very nature is called to some degree of belonging to the Church. Now certainly the separated Christian by reason of his baptism must possess a fuller degree

---

[7] "Moving forward through trial and tribulation, the Church is strengthened by the power of God's grace promised to her by the Lord, so that in the weakness of the flesh she may not waver from perfect fidelity, but remain a bride worthy of her Lord; that moved by the Holy Spirit she may never cease to renew herself, until through the cross she arrives at the light which knows no setting." <u>Ibid</u>., 26.

[8] <u>Ibid</u>., 33.

of incorporation than the unbeliever. This is suggested by the Constitution where it treats the status of the separated Christians. Here it elaborates some of those Christian elements possessed by the separated communities and referred to in chapter one. Regarding the separated communities of the West, the Constitution enumerates the following elements linking the separated Christians with the Roman Catholic Church: baptism, Sacred Scriptures, faith in the omnipotence of God the Father and the Incarnation of His Son, Jesus Christ, and other sacraments in addition to baptism. More significant than the above elements, as they have often been referred to in papal documents of the past, is the following statement of the Constitution. "They also share with us in prayer and other spiritual benefits, even in some true union in the Holy Spirit, for to them, too, he gives gifts and graces whereby he is operative among them with his sanctifying power."[9] The Constitution, then, implicitly acknowledges some degree of incorporation in the Church for the separated Christians and some measure of ecclesial reality for their communities.

2. Decree on Ecumenism

The Council Fathers first set forth their teaching on the Church in the Constitution De Ecclesia. Now in the Decree De Oecumenismo they set forth the Church's role in the field of ecumenism. Here, reflecting on the understanding of the Church reached in the Constitution, they

---

[9] Ibid., 34.

address themselves directly to the separated Christians and the problem of unity. The decree, however, does not merely re-work the statements of the Constitution in light of the separated Christians. Rather, it makes its own contribution to the understanding of the Church and further elaborates the position of the separated Christians as a result of the teaching in the Constitution.

There is a remarkable parallel between the development of the question of the ecclesial reality of the separated communities among the Catholic theologians and the consideration given to the same question by the Council Fathers in the Decree De Oecumenismo. This is seen when prescinding from the chapter divisions of the decree, it is discerned that the document first treats the ecclesial status of the separated Christians and then that of the separated community. As the development among Catholic theologians proceeded in the same manner between Mystici Corporis and the Second Vatican Council, it will be most beneficial for our purposes to consider the decree according to these two major divisions.

a) Status of the Separated Christian

While acknowledging that many large communities have broken from full Communion with the Catholic Church, the decree states that the individuals born into these communities today must not be charged with the sin of separation. These men brought up in the faith of Christ are in fact our brothers. "For men who believe in Christ and have been

properly baptized are brought into certain, though imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church."[10] While many differences divide these men from the Catholic Church and so present obstacles to full communion, "it remains true that all who have been justified by faith in baptism are incorporated into Christ."[11] It will be noted that the Constitution spelled out the conditions for full incorporation in the Catholic Church and only implicitly implied an imperfect incorporation for the separated Christians. Here in the decree on Ecumenism explicit recognition is given to the real but imperfect incorporation of the separated Christian by reason of his baptism.

In addition to the Sacrament of baptism these separated Christians share with us many other elements of the Christian life which embelish their union with us. Thus the Sacred Scriptures, the life of grace and the interior gifts of the Holy Spirit, gifts which by right belong to the Catholic Church, but find a fruitful existence among the separated Christians, are also mentioned. The decree reminds us that we must gladly acknowledge these genuine Christian endowments for the Holy Spirit cannot be divided. Whatever He works among the separated Christians for their sanctification contributes to our own edification as well.[12]

---

[10] Decretum de Oecumenismo, AAS (1965), 90-112. Citations here will be to the W. Abbot ed., The Documents of Vatican II, "Decree on Ecumenism," 345.

[11] Loc. cit.

[12] Ibid., 349.

It should be noted that neither the Constitution on the Church nor the Decree on Ecumenism uses the term member or membership to express the relationship of the separated Christian with the Church. Nevertheless, the decree especially leaves no doubt that these Christians are incorporated into the Church because of their incorporation into Christ.

> By the sacrament of baptism, whenever it is properly conferred in the way the Lord determined and received with the proper dispositions of soul, man becomes truly incorporated into the crucified and glorified Christ and is reborn to a sharing of the divine life. . ."[13]

The decree as the Constitution substitutes the word incorporation for membership. But while these Christians are truly incorporated into the Church, they are not fully incorporated into the Body of Christ and so are not fully members of the Church. Baptism is responsible for their incorporation but by itself is not capable of constituting a full incorporation such as exists among members of the Roman Catholic Church. For

> baptism of itself, is only a beginning, a point of departure for it is wholly directed toward the acquiring of fullness of life in Christ. Baptism is thus ordained toward a complete profession of faith, a complete incorporation into the system of salvation such as Christ Himself willed it to be, and finally, toward a complete integration into eucharistic communion.[14]

Thus the separated Christian is in real, though incomplete, communion with the Church. Complete communion or full incorporation into the

---

[13] Ibid., 363.

[14] Ibid., 364.

Body of Christ can only be obtained in the Catholic Church for it alone possesses the fullness of means to such a communion willed by Christ.

b) Status of the Separated Communities

The separated Christians do not possess the above mentioned genuine elements of the Church in isolation. They receive their share in the life of Christ and are nourished in this life in varying degrees within their communities. Moreover, in addition to the common elements of the Christian life they share with us, these communities perform liturgical services which enrich their life of grace and bring them to the communion of salvation.[15] From this the decree concludes that the Holy Spirit works within these communities "using them as means of salvation which derive their efficacy from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church."[16] Thus while these elements of the Church belong properly to the one Church of Christ, they can and do exist in an efficacious manner outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church. The decree on Ecumenism, then, as the Catholic ecumenical theologians, urges that we gladly acknowledge the Christian endowments and ecclesial nature of these separated communities. There is no danger here of religious indifferentism, rather it is a question of acknowledging the grace of the Holy Spirit who breathes where He will. And, as Christ founded but one Church, a fact on which Catholic and

---

[15] Ibid., 346.

[16] Loc. cit.

Protestant agree, the decree envisions the task of ecumenism as one of integrating the Christian elements of the separated communities into the fullness of the Catholic Church. The decree does not look to the past as the ideal of unity toward which ecumenism should strive, nor does it regard the present as the omega of Catholicism. Rather, humbly deferring to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the decree does not presume to define the glorious form the Church will take when, through the integration of the separated Christians, it will more perfectly reflect the unity which Christ willed.

> For although the Catholic Church has been endowed with all divinely revealed truth and with all means of grace, yet its members fail to live by them with all the fervor that they should. As a result the radiance of the Church's face shines less brightly in the eyes of our separated brethren and of the world at large, and the growth of God's kingdom is retarded.[17]

In the third and final chapter of the decree on Ecumenism the Council Fathers treat specifically the question of the Churchly reality of the communities of the West. From what has been said thus far, there can be no doubt but that the decree teaches that the separated communities do possess something of an ecclesial reality. This reality according to the decree is based upon the means of salvation which these communities possess in varying degrees. Because the means of salvation owe their efficacy to the fullness of means possessed by the Catholic Church, the decree implicitly states that the community as such is brought into communion with the Catholic Church.

---

[17] Ibid., 348.

> At the same time, however, one should recognize that between these churches and ecclesial communities on the one hand, and the Catholic Church on the other, there are very weighty differences not only of an historical sociological, psychological and cultural character, but especially in the interpretation of revealed truth.[18]

The decree does not hesitate to call the communities of the East, Church, in its strict theological sense because these communities as local churches approximate the full reality which Christ gave to His one Church. Because they have preserved apostolic succession and, therefore, the sacramental means of salvation, in particular the sacrament of unity, these communities are authentic realizations of Christ's Church. But as they are not in communion with the Holy See, they lack the fullness of unity which can only be had through union with Peter and his successors. The separated communities are included in the heading "Churches and Ecclesial Communities Separated From The Roman Apostolic See" which is the title of the third chapter of the decree.[19] It has been seen that the Council acknowledges that the members of these separated communities can possess the supreme degree of inner communion with Christ.[20] However, these communities do not

---

[18] Ibid., 362.

[19] Robert E. Hunt explains why The Decree does not distinguish which of the separated communities are churches and which are ecclesial communities. "It was not within the scope of De Oecumenismo to write a systematic appraisal of every known Protestant body!" Cf. R. E. Hunt, The Catholic Theological Society of America XXI. (1966) "The Separated Christian Churches And Communities In The Mystery Of Salvation," 25, 29-30.

[20] "It is right and salutary to recognize the riches of Christ and virtuous works in the lives of others who are bearing witness to Christ sometimes even to the shedding of their blood." Ibid., 349.

realize completely the nature of the Church as an Institution of salvation. Nevertheless, the decree asserts that they do possess as communities many elements of a churchly nature by means of which they are instruments of salvation.

Since doctrinal belief varies greatly among the churches within these separated communities the decree is primarily speaking of those ". . . who openly confess Jesus Christ as God and Lord and as the only mediator between God and man for the glory of the one God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."[21] Foremost among the elements giving rise to the ecclesial nature of these communities are the Sacred Scriptures, the sacrament of baptism, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper.[22] The supernatural life engendered in these communities through these elements is nourished by their faith in Christ and strengthened by the grace of baptism and the hearing of the Word of God. This life is further manifested among the people by genuine forms of Christian piety, prayer, and devotion.

c) General Observations

In the above consideration of the separated Christians and their

---

[21] Ibid., 362.

[22] ". . . and we believe that especially because of the lack of the sacrament of orders, they have not preserved the genuine and total reality of the Eucharistic mystery. Nevertheless, when they commemorate the Lord's death and resurrection in the Holy Supper, they profess that it signifies life in communion with Christ and they await His coming in glory." Ibid., 364.

communities the main concern was to see what the decree had to say about their relation to the Church as individuals and their ecclesiological status as communities. Consequently, the positive aspects of the Christian life among these people was emphasized. The decree, however, states very plainly, and this more than once, that the separated Christians as individuals and as communities do not possess that unity ". . . which Jesus Christ wished to bestow on all those whom He has given new birth into the one body. . ."[23] The Catholic Church alone possesses the fullness of means of salvation, and it alone has faithfully preserved in their entirety the gifts which Christ entrusted to the apostolic college.

It was seen in the last chapter that the Instruction of the Holy Office De motione oecumenica gave respect and recognition to the work of ecumenism by acknowledging it to be inspired by the Holy Spirit. In the Decree on Ecumenism the Church sees the work toward Christian unity not as something outside itself as though it were a movement worthy of praise and encouragement, but not such as demanded involvement. On the contrary it sees ecumenism as a movement which must necessarily embrace all Christians of good faith. There is only one ecumenism. The decree offers principles, not to guide the ecumenical movement, but to direct Catholics involved in ecumenism. For Catholics the primary concern should be self-renewal so that the splendor of the Church might more

---

[23] Ibid., 346.

readily guide those outside to the fullness of truth. The decree, then, humbly admits the failings of the Church in so far as it is an institution of men here on earth. It likewise acknowledges the imperfection of the Church's Catholicity which it presents to the world because of the divisions within Christianity.

B. Commentators on the Council Documents

To understand the teaching of the Church as presented in the above documents of Vatican II does not require a profound exegesis. The teaching is clearly stated. Nevertheless, to appreciate more deeply the magisterium's pronouncements on the ecclesial significance of the separated Christian communities a few of the more important commentaries will be considered here.

1. Bea

Objectively speaking the Decree on Ecumenism presents a carefully worded message on the Christian Unity movement including the present state of the question, its goals, and the Catholic position. Its primary dogmatic contribution to the development of ecclesiology, however, is subject to interpretation. The preeminent concern of the Catholic ecumenical theologian would appear to be the Decree's teaching on the relation of the separated communities to the Catholic Church. This is readily understandable and Cardinal Bea is no exception. In his study the Cardinal presents a theological analysis of the actual situation of

Christians in the world according to the decree. The decree itself, he says, first sets forth the differences and the bonds of union between the Roman Catholic Church and the separated Christian communities. The theological description of these communities is based on what revelation has to say about the Church and its unity.[24]

From revelation the decree chooses three essential facts concerning the unity of the Church. First it describes the overall plan of unity and its realization in the life time of Christ. Then the completion of this plan following the glorification of Christ and the sending of the Holy Spirit who is the principle of unity in the Church. Finally, God's plan to include the cooperation of man in effecting this unity in the institution established by Christ. Thus the apostolic college with Peter as its head cooperates in securing unity in the Church. With this understanding of the oneness of the Church the decree asks what is the status of those Christian communities and individuals in whom only a part of these elements of unity are realized. The Council answers that those born in communities outside the Church must be given good faith. Because of their baptism and belief in Christ, they are in some kind of communion, though imperfect, with the Catholic Church. The basis for this communion as individuals is incorporation by reason of baptism.[25]

---

[24]Cf. A. Bea, "The Decree on Ecumenism," Month 33 (1965), 146-7.

[25]Cf. ibid., 147-9.

In addition to their communion with the Church resulting from baptism Bea calls attention to the many elements of great value existing among these communities. Thus the decree states that the communities as such are means of salvation for their members. Bea points out that the Council cautions against undue optimism by stating that these communities do not possess the fullness of means to salvation. While implicitly there is acknowledged a certain ecclesial character in these communities, theologically speaking they cannot be called church. Church in its constitutive reality is defined in terms of local Church. An essential element of Church in these terms is the unity effected through apostolic celebration of the Eucharist, and this element is lacking among the separated Christian communities of the West. Nevertheless, Bea notes that the Council, while pointing out the imperfect qualities of the elements possessed by the separated communities, takes great pains to underscore the supernatural life and imperfect unity resulting from these elements.[26]

2. Jaeger

In his book, A Stand On Ecumenism, Cardinal Jaeger reaches an understanding of the harmony between the Constitution on the Church and the Decree on Ecumenism particularly helpful in clarifying the magisterium's teaching on the separated communities. It has been seen

---

[26]Cf. Ibid., 149-53.

that both documents point to the ecclesial character of these communities and their imperfect communion with the Catholic Church. At times one has the impression that the theological basis of their ecclesial character and their communion with the Church is founded on some kind of in quantum tantum theory as though the ecclesial character were based solely on the number of elements. Jaeger dispels this notion by explaining the theological significance of the elements possessed outside the Church and the nature of the separated communities' ecclesial character as Church.

The Decree acknowledges that many of the elements which give life and structure to the Church can exist outside the Church. Jaeger notes that the decree as well as the Constitution on the Church make it clear that these elements form an organic unity within the Church. Hence it should not be understood that the Church is composed of some sort of quantitative composite of these elements. The same understanding of the elements must be applied to the separated communities. Thus they do not have relation to the Catholic Church on the basis of a quantitative analysis of the elements they possess. For that matter neither does the Church judge her own ecclesial character on this basis. However, on the basis of the elements preserved these churches have an incomplete communion with the Catholic Church. In this manner the Decree acknowledges the complex reality of these separated communities which are at once outside and yet in imperfect communion with the

Church. The ecclesiological significance of the elements, then, is owed to their qualitative value which contributes to the communion existing between the Roman Catholic Church and the separated communities.

Jaeger cites article 15 of the Constitution on the Church which gives explicit testimony to the ecclesial elements preserved among the separated communities. The relation on article 15, he says, states that the term ecclesiastical communities is used to signify that the ecclesial elements apply not only to individuals but to the communities as well. For this reason the communities are means of salvation for their members.

To understand the value and meaning of these elements one must recall that the Decree on Ecumenism is based on the ecclesiology of the Constitution which is constructed on a conception of the Church as communion. "All the individual structured elements of the Church are seen under the aspect of communion, in accordance with the theology of the Fathers in both East and West."[27] Thus understood a new light is shed on the value of the elements preserved in the other churches. As Jaeger mentioned above, the elements must be seen in a qualitative view rather than a quantative one. And as they form an organic unity within the Church, so among the separated communities they are somehow

---

[27]L. Jaeger, A Stand On Ecumenism, 214.

constructive of unity. Thus they build up unity and communion within the separated community and in relation to the Roman Catholic Church. However, Jaeger notes that these elements are efficacious and constructive of communion not qua separated but as joined to the one Church of Christ. They receive their supernatural dynamism from Christ through the Holy Spirit.

It is evident that the primary significance of the elements is their unity building power. Protestants, Jaeger comments, imply that the Decree views the Church's understanding of its role in unity as that of a bridge builder. That is, it sees itself at the center. The separated communities are linked by a bridge whose length is in direct proportion to the number of elements they have preserved from the Catholic Church. Jaeger points out that the Decree does not view unity exactly in this perspective. There is in fact a more vital connection between the Roman Catholic Church and the other churches. Christ is the one source of unity on which the Roman Catholic Church and the other churches depend. The Catholic Church in its institutional form verifies that unity in its essential perfection. Now the elements which the separated communities preserve belong to the one Church of Christ. They effect then a direct though incomplete union with the Church which alone possesses the fullness of unity willed by Christ. Thus once again Jaeger stresses the fact that the elements have a qualitative value not a quantitative one.[28]

---

[28]For the above treatment of Jaeger, see ibid., 82-3, 121-2, 190-1, 214-15.

From all this consideration of the elements as presented in the Decree and the Constitution, Jaeger draws two conclusions worthy of note.

1. In no way should one construe elements as though these ecclesial communities were a simple addition of various different elements.

2. These elements in the separated communities are not merely static entities. They must also be understood as dynamic realities. The Constitution points out that the Holy Spirit works through them and seeks to bring them to the fullness of unity desired by Christ. These elements are already effecting a certain limited degree of unity with the Catholic Church. They are vital elements proceeding from Christ and leading back to him.[29]

According to Jaeger the Council documents do not point to the elements as the theological basis for the ecclesial character of the separated communities as Church. From the above exposition it is evident that the elements account for the communities' unity and communion with the Church. One could say that they build up the churchliness already possessed in these communities. But there is something prior to the elements themselves which constitute the ecclesial character of these communities. It is the mediatory role of the Church which the separated community shares with the Church of Christ as a result of baptism and faith in Jesus Christ as God and Savior. All separated Christians receive their faith in Jesus Christ as a result of the administration of the sacraments and the preaching of this faith in

---

[29] Ibid., 215.

their communities. These two elements, faith and baptism, create visible unity, however rudimentary, among all separated Christians, and moreover are responsible for the ecclesial character of an individual community. Jaeger introduces a subtle distinction here between the ecclesial character of the community and the ecclesial nature of the elements. What is prior to the element and responsible for its efficacy is faith in Jesus Christ. It is then the same Spirit of Christ who created this unity realized to its perfection in the Roman Catholic Church, who is also responsible for the unity which exists between the separated churches and the Catholic Church. Thus the ecclesial character of the separated community results from the Spirit of Christ who works among them effecting a union of the members with Christ which is the essence of the supernatural life of the Church according to the Constitution. It is through the same Spirit that the elements of the Church preserved in these communities are able to bring them into imperfect communion with the Catholic Church. As there is only one mediator between God the Father and man, Jesus Christ, so there is but one Spirit who reconciles man with God in the one Church established by Christ. Because the separated communities perform in a real but incomplete and imperfect way this role of mediation, they possess something of the ecclesial character of the one Church of Christ. Since the Church is one, these communities are, then, means

of salvation not inasmuch as they are separated, but insofar as they preserve the elements which belong by right to the one Church of Christ.[30]

Jaeger, as was seen in Thils' view, shows how the Decree allows for the possibility of a greater degree of union with Christ among the separated communities than at times is achieved in the Catholic Church. The Decree points out, Jaeger notes, that while the Church is institutionally perfect, that is possesses the fullness of means of salvation, it can be and has been sinful in its members. Thus the members can hinder the efficacy of the Church as means of salvation. Consequently, a diocese, which as a local Church is institutionally perfect, might because of the imperfection of its members fail to enjoy a strong union of love with Christ. Whereas, a separated ecclesial community, institutionally imperfect, possessing only some of the means to salvation, might realize a closer bond of love in Christ.[31]

The Cardinal further indicates that the ecclesiology of the Constitution is the basis for ecumenical discussion of the separated communities in the decree. He suggests that the Constitution's study of the Church as the mystical Body of Christ and the People of God, and its teaching on collegiality enabled the decree to develop its ecumenical ecclesiology. Thus the Constitution does not make a simple

---

[30]Cf. Ibid., 151-2, 84-5, 121-22.

[31]Cf. ibid., 122-4.

identification between the mystical Body of Christ and the Catholic Church. By predicating this relationship on the word 'subsist' a harmony is realized with what is taught elsewhere about the ecclesial elements in the other churches. A simple identity, as originally proposed, would seem to exclude the other churches as of no value. In considering the Church as the People of God, "the Church as a whole appears as the bearer of the means of salvation, as the community of life, love, and truth established by Christ, as the instrument of redemption, as the light of the world, and as the people of God on pilgrimage towards its eschatological fulfillment."[32] Such a view of the Church makes it possible to view the separated communities in a positive way, and moreover enkindles an ecumenical spirit which seeks to lead them to complete unity. Jaeger notes that the discussion of collegiality was not in any sense aimed at opposing the pope, but rather was undertaken so as to understand better the multiplicity of "individual churches in the Communion of the Church as a whole, with the Holy Spirit as the invisible principle of unity and the successor of Peter as the visible principle."[33] He points out that the understanding of the Eucharist as a unity building sacrament helped the Council to arrive at a clear notion of the individual churches. It is the Eucharist which builds up unity in the Church. This points to the

---

[32] Ibid., 188.

[33] Ibid., 193.

basic notion of the Church as that of a liturgical assembly. Now the decree on Ecumenism derives its basic understanding of the Church from the notion of the Church conceived as the local community. Thus the ecclesial reality of the separated communities is measured ultimately from the degree in which they realize the notion of a local Church. As the apostolic celebration of the Eucharist is an essential constituent of the local community, these separated communities, while possessing an ecclesial structure, have not preserved this primary element. Thus they cannot be called Church.[34]

3. Thils

Gustave Thils is one of the pioneers in the re-evaluation of the elements of the Church and of the significance of their existence outside the Church. By 1937 he had already made an historical study of their polemical use in Catholic Apologetics following the Reformation.[35] In his commentary on the Decree on Ecumenism, Thils shows great interest in the dynamic aspect of these elements as taught by the Council Fathers. His understanding of their ecclesial nature is very similar to that of Cardinal Jaeger. Thus, Thils sees the elements of the Church present in the separated communities as primarily constitutive of their communion with the Catholic Church, and with the presence of the Holy Spirit as the basis for their ecclesial character.

---

[34]Cf. ibid., 179-96.

[35]Cf. G. Thils, Les notes de l'Église dans l'apologetique catholique depuis la Réforme.

The decree, he notes, lists the elements of the Church possessed by the other Christians from which there arises a certain ecclesial communion with us. These elements are not static realities but rather realities of life by which the Church is built up and vivified. They come from Christ and lead to him. Thils says that the use of terms in the decree such as life, movement, and dynamism are clear indications that the Fathers intend to remove any notion of immobility (statisme) from the understanding of the elements. Further, the decree uses the theory of elements to describe theologically the other churches and ecclesial communities. However, the theory of elements present a difficulty. Unless properly understood, the Church might not be seen as a totality, an organic unity, but merely as a collection of desparate elements. The elements can also lead to a purely institutional understanding of the Church when in fact the Church is also bound up in the salvific activity of Jesus Christ.[36]

To understand the Fathers' teaching on the ecclesial character of the separated communities, Thils turns to the ecclesiology of the Decree. He notes that it is of course a Catholic ecclesiology, but one whose roots are hard to define. It is developed in the Constitution on the Church and, while faithful to the sources of revelation,

---

[36]Cf. G. Thils, "Le decret conciliaire sur l'oecuménisme," NRT 87 (1965), 228-9, 239-40, also Le Decrét sur l'oecuménisme du deuxieme Concile du Vatican, 52-3.

incorporates different trends in ecclesiology. Thils describes the ecclesiology of the decree as an ecclesiology of communion.

> That is to say an ecclesiology that defines the Church as an organic whole made of spiritual bonds (faith, hope, charity) and bonds of the visible structure (profession of faith, sacramental economy, pastoral ministry), which culminates in the Eucharistic mystery, the source and expression of the unity of the Church, better, of the one Church.[37]

Such an ecclesiology brings into play all of the constitutive elements of the Church, but the underlying theme remains Communion. It does not suggest the juridical aspect of the Church since each of these elements is considered as it conditions, favors, realizes or completes the Communion which is the Church. Now the decree, as Thils points out, states that the elements present among the separated communities contribute to their communion with the Catholic Church. The basis for their ecclesial structure, however, is the life of the Holy Spirit who is the very substance of unity and the sustaining force behind the elements which build up their communities and effect their real but imperfect union with the Catholic Church.[38]

---

[37] "C'est-à-dire une ecclésiologie qui définit l'Église comme un tout organique fait des liens spirituels (foi, espérance, charité) et des liens de structure visible (profession de foi, économie sacramentaire, ministère pastoral), et qui culmine dans le mystère Eucharistique, source et expression de l'unité de l'Église, mieux, de l'Église une." Art. cit., 239. Cf. also G. Thils, Le Décret sur l'oecuménisme du deuxieme Concile du Vatican, 39.

[38] Cf. ibid., 239-41.

4. Baum

In the final drafts of the Constitution and the Decree on Ecumenism Baum notes that the Council Fathers incorporated a more positive view of the separated communities which was lacking in the earlier drafts. He cites the addenda to section 15 of the Constitution which recognizes the separated communities as means of salvation for their members and the change in title of chapter three of the Decree which acknowledges the communities as ecclesial.

The Constitution, he says, develops the teaching of the Encyclical Mystici Corporis by making three significant advances. First he remarks that the encyclical made tremendous progress in Catholic ecclesiology. It paved the way for the development of a true ecclesiology that was concerned solely with a greater understanding of the Church as mystery of salvation. However, because of its canonically oriented definition of the Church as a social body and its equation with the mystical Body of Christ, not everyone was satisfied. The Constitution, he says, is more faithful to St. Paul who identifies the Christian with the Body of Christ as the source of the new divine life received from Him. Thus the Constitution states that "communicating his own life to those he redeems, Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, joins his brothers called out of all people to himself as his own body."[39] It is only

---

[39]G. Baum, "The Ecclesial Reality of the Other Churches," Concilium 4 (1965), 37.

after a consideration of the gifts which Christ gave to His followers that any mention is made of the Church as a social Body. Baum points out that even when the mystical Body is considered in its social dimension, it is primarily under the notion of communion. Secondly, the relationship between the mystical Body of Christ and the Catholic Church is explained differently in the Constitution. While the encyclical taught a strict identity between the two, the Constitution states that they form one complex reality. Baum says that this new wording, while admitting the identity, suggests that the Body of Christ transcends the visible Church. The same is true for the identity between the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church. By stating that the Church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church, prejudice is not done to the ecclesial elements existing among the separated communities. Finally, Baum notes that the section on thePeople of God modifies the teaching of Mystici Corporis which adhered to a strict definition of membership admitting only Roman Catholics as members. The Constitution substitutes the word plene for the encyclical's reapse and so admits of other degrees of membership in the Church.[40]

From the teaching of the Constitution on the Church, Baum draws three conclusions regarding the status of the separated communities. First, the Catholic Church is the one institutionally perfect realization

---

[40]Cf. ibid., 35-8, also G. Baum, The Constitution On The Church, 18-24.

of the Church of Christ on earth. Only of it can be said this is the Church of Christ. Secondly

> . . . the Church of Christ, without ceasing to be incarnate and historical in its social existence, transcends the Catholic Church so that we may not only speak of non-Catholic Christians as in some way belonging to it, but are also justified in regarding non-Catholic Christian Communities as being imperfect or defective realizations of it.[41]

Thirdly, the Church of Christ which makes one complex reality with the Catholic Church is present in other Christian Churches.

Baum makes it clear that he is not destroying the unique visibility of the Catholic Church as the one true Church of Christ manifestly present in history. He is saying that the Church of Christ while perfectly and fully realized in the Catholic Church ". . . is also present, according to varying degrees of institutional imperfections, in other Christian Churches."[42] It is the ontological transcendence of the Church of Christ which enables one to speak of its imperfect realization in other Christian communities. According to Baum this transcendence of the Church of Christ is the first theological basis for the ecclesial reality of the other Churches.

In the Decree on Ecumenism Baum refers to the many passages which speak of the elements of the Church that exist among the separated communities. He notes that the Decree is clearly pointing to the

---

[41] G. Baum, art. cit., 39.

[42] Loc. cit.

ecclesial reality of these communities. They announce the kingdom of Christ to their people, and so in some way are instruments of salvation in the hands of Christ. Thus, depending on the number of the gifts of Christ which they share in common with us, these communities realize the reality of Church. Baum cautions that such a manner of conceiving the other communities runs the risk of seeing the Church only in its visible, structural appearance. While a consideration of the ecclesial reality in the other communities must necessarily take into account the visible means of grace preserved therein, it should not be forgotten that their bond of unity and existence depend on Christ. Consequently, Baum states that, in addition to the consideration of the communities as imperfect realizations of the institutional Church, it is equally important to see in them a community of believers united with Jesus Christ by faith and love. Baum, too, therefore emphasizes the importance of the Holy Spirit as constitutive of the ecclesial character of these communities.[43]

5. Leeming

To give a detailed account of Bernard Leeming's work The Vatican Council And Christian Unity would be repetitious at this point. That part of the book which immediately concerns the subject treated in this paper agrees substantially with what was said by the above theologians. Leeming's work, however, is more than just a commentary on the decree.

---

[43]Cf. ibid., 40-1.

He treats many areas of the ecumenical movement only remotely connected with the decree. For these reasons it will be sufficient to refer to a few comments of Leeming not touched upon this far.

Leeming notes the significance attached to the use of the word 're-integration' in the first sentence of the decree. This word must be understood in conjunction with the Christian endowments which the Decree recognizes among the separated communities. Because these communities possess genuine Christian elements productive of grace in their liturgical practices and private spiritual life, the goal of unity does not mean a return but rather a 're-integration' or restoration of unity. Leeming agrees with the editor of La Civilta Cattolica who suggests that the word return implies an immobilism on the part of the Church. The word 're-integration' suggests that the goal of unity involves a mutual effort and hence is more expressive of the true meaning of ecumenism as discussed in the decree.[44] Thus the imperfect communion, which the separated communities share with the Catholic Church, will be made perfect; the elements which they possess will achieve their full perfection, and the Catholic Church itself when the goal of unity is achieved, will more perfectly reflect the gifts which Christ gave it.

6. Conclusion

Many theologians have written commentaries on the documents of the Second Vatican Council examined in this chapter. As it would be impos-

---

[44]Cf. B. Leeming, The Vatican Council And Christian Unity, 101, footnote 4.

sible to treat them all, it was necessary to employ some criterion of selection. The above men were chosen because of their contributions to ecumenical theology and their immediate involvement in the Council itself. Other commentaries by men less immediately involved with the Council are not without significance. Worthy of note are the writings of Camillus Hay[45] and Kevin McNamara.[46] Both of these men remark on the development in the understanding of the Church and the status of the separated communities arising from the teaching of the Second Vatican Council.

Summary

Several evident and significant conclusions can be drawn from the above exposition and commentaries on the Constitution on the Church and the Decree on Ecumenism.

1. The magisterium of the Church confirms many of the theological opinions voiced by Catholic ecumenical theologians regarding the separated Christians prior to the Council.
2. The question of membership in the mystical Body of Christ for the separated Christian is resolved. These people

---

[45]Cf. Camillus Hay, "The Ecclesiological Significance of the Decree on Ecumenism," JES 3 (1966), 343-53.

[46]Cf. K. McNamara et alii, "Vatican II: Decree on Ecumenism," ITQ 32 (1965), 129-56.

enjoy a real but imperfect incorporation in the Church of Christ by reason of their baptism.[47]

3. The elements of the Church existing among the separated communities are not without significance. They are living, dynamic realizations of the grace of the Holy Spirit working among them. And while they owe their vitality to the one Church of Christ, they do effect a unity in the community itself and between the community and the Catholic Church.

4. Because of their faith in Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit, these separated communities are means of salvation for their members. They are not merely social bodies but ecclesial communities because they preserve some of the institutional means of salvation given to the Church by Christ.

5. Ecumenism is a work in which the Catholic Church can join without fear of compromising its traditional teaching or belief. The Church itself because of the imperfection of its members and the existence of Christians outside, fails to reflect the splendor of Christ's gifts. Hence the Church will also benefit when perfect unity is achieved.

---

[47]Pope Paul explicitly states that all those who have been baptized, even those who are separated from Church unity, are in the one Church. Cf. Paul VI, "Who Belongs to The Church," The Pope Speaks, 11 (1966), 373.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

A. Conclusions

In this thesis the writer has attempted to account for the development that has taken place among Catholic theologians regarding the theological status of the separated communities and to present the theological basis for their ecclesial reality. The consideration of this question has been limited to the interval between the encyclical Mystici Corporis Christi and the Second Vatican Council. However, it is obvious that this development in ecclesiology has roots which antedate the encyclical. It is also true that the Second Vatican Council merely marks a definite point of progress in this development and not its full fruition.

According to this study the encyclical Mystici Corporis Christi must be seen as simultaneously closing the door on one phase of ecclesiology and ushering in a new period of development. The consistent and constant emphasis on the visible structure of the Church following the Reformation is finally balanced by the mystical Body concept of the Church which restored the traditional harmony between the visible and invisible aspects. A new dimension of the nature of the Church was thereby made manifest, for the encyclical sees in the

interior union of grace joining the individual to Christ an element of ecclesial reality. In addition, then, to the visible structure of the Church the interior union of the members with Christ must be seen as constituting part of the reality which is the Church.

The consequences for ecumenism were immediately apparent to Catholic theologians. Engaged as they were in studying the Christian life of the separated Christians the encyclical prompted them to examine the ecclesial significance of their union with Christ resulting from baptism. Since the teaching of Mystici Corporis a strict dichotomy between the body and soul of the Church is no longer possible. Consequently, the separated Christian by reason of his baptism in some way belongs to the body of the Church as well as the soul. At the same time the doctrine extra ecclesiam nulla salus is safeguarded for the encyclical teaches that the Church as the visible means of salvation is the source of all grace uniting men with Christ. It is through the Church, then, that the separated Christian is brought to Christ.

Because of the above teaching we conclude that the encyclical Mystici Corporis Christi was a catalyst to Catholic theologians, for it gave to theology a basic understanding of the nature of the Church as the mystical Body of Christ without which further investigation into the status of the separated Christian would have been greatly retarded.

The encyclical Mystici Corporis touched off a prolific debate on the status of the separated Christian in relation to the Church. The question was not yet settled when the more complex problem concerning

the relationship of the separated community was injected into the picture. It would be difficult to point to any one factor as responsible for the transit from separated christian to separated community. The very fact that a certain amount of unanimity was achieved regarding the imperfect membership of the separated Christian suggested that attention be given to the community itself wherein the Christian life was nourished.

Some of the more salient factors which led Catholic theologians to a consideration of the ecclesial reality of the separated community were examined in this thesis.

First, the People of God theology illuminated the dynamic aspect of the divine life shared by the members of Christ's Body suggested by the encyclical Mystici Corporis. The Church is now seen not as the institution of salvation but as the community of the saved. In other words the reality of the Church is seen more in the divine life which the members share with Christ than in the means instituted by Christ to bring salvation. From this point of view the genuine Christian life shared in the separated community took on greater significance. "Invalid" orders and the lack of many means to salvation became secondary to the fact that the Holy Spirit is present in these communities. Catholic theologians began to see among the separated communities a People of God like themselves seeking perfection. Moreover, the pilgrim concept of the People of God gave Catholic ecumenists a theologi-

cal basis for uncovering the positive value of the Christian elements living in the separated communities.

Secondly, the two documents of the magisterium De motione oecumenica and Suprema haec sacra exercised considerable influence in this development. The Instruction upheld the validity of ecumenical endeavors and encouraged other theologians to engage in dialogue with the separated communities. The clarification of the doctrine extra ecclesiam nulla salus effected by the letter of the Holy Office assisted Catholic ecumenical theologians in further resolving the theological position of the separated Christians. The theologian now sought to determine the degree of membership of the separated Christian in the Church whereas formerly the question of membership itself was debated.

Thirdly, the ecumenical movement itself prompted Catholic theologians to examine the Christian life of the separated community in relation to the mystery of the Church. They followed very closely the proceedings of the World Council of Churches. The search for unity within the separated communities made Catholic theologians aware of the imperfection of the Church's unity because of the separation. The goal of ecumenism, then, is not entirely confined to the separated Christians, but it is a task which Catholics must join if they are to be faithful to Christ. Thus Catholic theologians in view of the doctrinal development within the ecumenical movement concentrated more on the similarities between our understanding of the Church and that emerging among the separated communities.

Finally, the development can be attributed partly to a change in theological method. The approach of the Catholic theologian to the study of the separated communities might best be described as existential, positive and historical. He has begun to realize that the truths of the faith are conditioned by the historical circumstances and the cultural milieu of the times in which they were formulated. It is necessary to reexamine the traditional teaching of the Church in the light of present day problems. The study of the Catholic ecumenical theologians treated in this paper bears witness to their existential, historical approach. They could not have arrived at a discussion of the ecclesial reality of the separated community except by bringing the questions of today to the truths which were formulated yesterday. In this manner new insights were gained into the nature of the Church which advanced our understanding of the separated communities.

There is general agreement among Catholic ecumenical theologians that the separated communities are more than dissident groups which stand outside the Catholic community. On the contrary it has been found that the ties which unite them to us are stronger than that which divide us. For this reason the theologians would agree that the separated communities are in fact imperfect realizations of the one Church. The theological basis for their churchliness has been described in terms of the vestigia ecclesiae, an analogy of the Church as sacrament, and an analogy of the local Church. All of the theologians would agree that the ontological basis for their ecclesial reality

must be placed in the Holy Spirit who is the source and life of the Christian elements preserved in these communities.

It is evident that the normative reality against which the ecclesial nature of the separated community is measured is the Catholic understanding of the Church. However, it is not the Church understood merely from its external, institutional aspect, but rather the reality of the Church as it is present in its members. From this point of view the Church is present in the individual when he is joined in a living union with Christ through the grace of the Holy Spirit. Now the separated communities, by preserving the sacrament of baptism, and faith in the Sacred Scriptures, have maintained a vital link with Christ and His Church. According to the theologians considered in this paper, then, these communities perform a major salvific function of the Church and so in some imperfect way present the reality of the Church to their people. Thus, they are said to possess a genuine ecclesial reality.

Our study of the documents Constitutio Dogmatica de Ecclesia and Decretum de Oecumenismo has confirmed and further clarified the findings of Catholic theologians since the encyclical Mystici Corporis Christi. These two documents are of monumental importance for they effected a much needed consensus regarding the question of the ecclesial reality of the separated community. The Council has established beyond doubt the theological significance of the separated Christians as corporate identities. Thus the community itself, and not just the

individual, is in real, though imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church. The Church of Christ is present in these communities in which individuals are brought to salvation by them and not in spite of them.

According to the teaching of the Council the ecclesial reality of these communities is measured according to the degree in which there is verified in them genuine elements of the one Church. These elements are living, dynamic realizations of the grace of the Holy Spirit working among them. While they owe their vitality to the one Church of Christ they do effect a unity in the community itself and between the community and the Catholic Church. Finally, the Decree on Ecumenism makes it clear that the Catholic Church can join in the work for unity without fear of compromising its traditional teaching or belief. The Church itself because of the imperfections of its members and the existence of Christians outside fails to reflect the splendor of Christ's gifts. Hence the Church will also be a beneficiary when perfect unity is achieved.

B. Perspectives

It is quite evident from our study that great strides have been made in our ecclesiological understanding of the separated communities. However, we must not deceive ourselves. The goal of Christian unity is far from achieved. The Second Vatican Council has provided a theological basis from which further study can proceed. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit theologians from both sides must apply themselves to this task.

The ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council is essentially an ecclesiology of communion. In other words the reality of the Church in a particular community results from the eucharistic celebration of the people through the hands of their bishops. The individual members are incorporated into the Church through baptism and are strengthened in the communal life of grace through the sacrament of the eucharist. The Church, then, is present in the individual because he is joined in a vital union with Christ through the Holy Spirit.

Now if the Church is essentially a community of men joined to Christ through the Spirit it would seem that the theologian should give more study to this aspect of the Christian life present in the separated community. Rather than concentrating on a quantative study of the elements present in these communities direction should be given to a more intensive examination of the qualitative aspect of these elements. The Church is first and foremost the community of believers united with Christ through the sacraments under the episcopal college. The reality of the living union with Christ is, in this view, more primary than the sum of the institutional means of salvation. Now the separated Christians share with us in this communion with Christ through the Spirit. For this reason the writer would suggest that further study of the separated community should evaluate the qualitative and pneumatological aspect of their Christian life.[1]

---

[1]Cf. Robert Hunt for further remarks on the need to study the pneumatological and qualitative aspects of the elements preserved in the separated communities. "The Separated Christian Churches And Communities In The Economy Of Salvation," The Catholic Theological Society of America 21 (1966), 27-8.

The Second Vatican Council has stated unequivocally that the separated communities possess a genuine ecclesial reality. This means that the Church of Christ exists in their communities. Consequently the acts performed by these communities and the ministers who preach, baptize, and celebrate the Lord's Supper within them in some way participate in the sacramental function of the Church. This follows from the fact that these communities are means of salvation for their people. They are then channels of grace for their members. Consideration should be given then to the salutary acts performed in these communities in order to determine the degree of sacramental reality present therein.

It is no longer possible to refute the presence of sacraments within these communities simply by stating they are invalid. It is a certain fact that they possess at least the sacraments of baptism and matrimony. Now since their ministers preach the Word of God and perform many other functions of a sacerdotal nature it would not seem unreasonable to speak of an analogous presence of the Sacrament of Orders within their communities. Frans Josef van Beeck observes that to speak of their sacraments simply in terms of valid and invalid is to say nothing of their fruitfulness. To say that a sacrament is merely valid indicates that the recipient is in bad faith. Thus it says nothing of the union effected with Christ through the Holy Spirit.[2] For these

---

[2]Cf. F. J. van Beeck, "Towards An Ecumenical Understanding Of The Sacraments," JES 3 (1966), 58-67.

reasons it would seem imperative to examine the sacramental reality behind the ministers and the acts of worship performed in the separated communities. Certainly, they are not nothing. Moreover, since these communities possess something of the one Church of Christ there is every reason to believe that the acts which give expression to their ecclesial nature might contain something of sacramental reality.

Finally, since the nature of a thing flows from its actions it would be useful to determine to what degree the separated community realizes the nature of Church from its actions. Aside from the Christian elements preserved within these communities many of the actions which they perform are indicative of the salvific function Christ entrusted to His Church. It has already been noted by one theologian that in the present economy there are many individuals who would never have known Christ were it not for the separated community. If the separated communities act in the manner in which the Church acts, granted they do not possess all of the means of salvation, then it would seem possible to speak of them analogously in terms of Church. We have but to recall Christ's reply to John who sought to hinder the man casting out devils. "Do not forbid him, because there is no one who shall work a miracle in my name, and then be able to speak ill of me. For he who is not against you is for you." (Lk. 9:37-39)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

List of Abbreviations

AAS	Acta Apostolicae Sedis
ABR	American Benedictine Review
AER	The American Ecclesiastical Review
BM	Benediktinische Monatsschrift
CC	La Civilta Cattolica
CrC	Cross Currents
CM	Collectanea Mechliniensia
CR	Clergy Review
DC	Documentation Catholique
DR	The Downside Review
ETL	Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses
G	Gregorianum
HJ	The Heythrop Journal
IER	The Irish Ecclesiastical Record
ITQ	The Irish Tehological Quarterly
JES	Journal of Ecumenical Studies
LV	Lumière et Vie
NCWC	National Catholic Welfare Conference
NRT	Nouvelle Revue Theologique

RN	Revue Nouvelle
RSPT	Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques
RSR	Revue des Science Religieuses
TD	Theology Digest
TG	Theologie und Glaube
TQ	Theologische Quartalschrift
TS	Theological Studies
TZ	Theologische Zeitschrift
VD	Verbum Domini
VUC	Vers l'Unité Chrétienne

Sources

Documents of the Magisterium

Pope Pius XII, Mystici Corporis Christi, AAS 35 (1943) 193-248. Eng. tr. The Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, Catholic Truth Society, 1958.

_____, Mediator Dei, AAS 39 (1947) 521-95. Eng. tr. Mediator Dei, NCWC Washington, D. C.

_____, Humani Generis, AAS 42 (1950) 561-78. Eng. tr. Humani Generis, NCWC Washington, D. C.

Instructio De motione oecumenica, AAS 42 (1950) 142-47.

Suprema haec sacra, AER 127 (1952) 307-15.

Pope John XXIII, Ad Petri Cathedram, AAS 51 (1959) 497-531. Eng. tr.

Constitutio Dogmatica de Ecclesia, AAS 57 (1965) 5-71. Eng. tr. "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," The Documents of Vatican II, New York 1966.

Decretum de Oecumenismo, AAS 57 (1965) 90-112. Eng. tr. "Decree on Ecumenism," The Documents of Vatican II, New York 1966.

Pope Paul VI, "Who Belongs to the Church," The Pope Speaks 11 (1966).

Mansi, Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio, 51.

Bibliographical Sources

Dictionnaire De Théologie Catholique 4.

Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses (1943-1966).

Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche 6.

Rahner, K. et Vorgrimler, H., Theological Dictionary, tr. C. Ernst, New York 1965.

Theological Writings

Books

Algermissen, K., Konfessionskunde, Paderborn 1950.

Aubert, R., Problemes de l'unité Chrétienne, Initiation, Chevetogne 1953.

_____, Le Christ et les Églises, Paris 1961.

_____, L'Ecclesiologie au Concile du Vatican, Le Concile et les conciles, Chevetogne 1960.

_____, Le Saint-Siège et l'Union des Églises, Brussels 1947.

Baum, G., O.S.A., That They May Be One, London 1958.

_____, The Catholic Quest for Christian Unity, New York 1965.

_____, ed., Ecumenical Theology Today, New York 1964.

Bea, A., The Unity of Christians, ed. B. Leeming, New York 1963.

_____, L'Église en dialogue, Paris 1962.

Bellarmine, R., De controversiis Christianae fidei adversus nostri temporis haereticos 2.

Bellini, A., Il Movimento Ecumenico, Padua 1960.

Billot, J., De Ecclesia Christi 3 vols. Rome 1898-1900.

Biot, F., O.P., L'Église Face Aux Chrétiens Séparés, Paris 1963.

Bouyer, L., C. Or., Parola, Chiesa E Sacramenti Nel Protestanti E Cattolica, Brescia 1962.

_____, Du Protestantisme A L'Église, 2ed. Paris 1955.

Butler, B. C., O.S.B., The Idea of the Church, London 1962.

Callahan, D., Christianity Divided, Protestant and Roman Catholic Theological Issues, New York 1961.

Cerfaux, L., The Church in the Theology of St. Paul, trs. G. Webb and A. Walker, New York 1959.

Congar, Y., O.P., Aspects de l'oecuménisme (La Collection "Etudes Religieuses" 756) Paris 1962.

_____, Lay People in the Church, tr. D. Attwater, London 1962.

_____, Divided Christendom, tr. M. Bousfield, London 1939.

_____, Sainte Église, (Unam Sanctam 41) Paris 1964.

_____, Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'Église, (Unam Sanctam 20), Paris 1950.

_____, Un Concile Pour Notre Temps, Paris 1961.

_____, Chrétiens En Dialogue, (Unam Sanctam 50) Paris 1964. Eng. tr. Dialogue Between Christians, tr. P. Loretz, Westminster, Md. 1966.

Cristiani, L. et al., Catholics and Protestants: Separated Brothers, Westminster, Md. 1960.

Dumont, C. J., O. P., Approaches to Christian Unity, tr. H. St. John, Baltimore, 1959.

Dumont, E., La situation du protestant baptise et de bonne foi par rapport a l'unique Église du Christ, St. Maurice 1959.

Eger, J., Salus Gentium, Munich 1947.

Feiner, J., et. al., ed., Theology Today, trs. P. White and R. Kelly, Milwaukee 1965.

Franzelin, J., De Ecclesia Christi, Rome 1887.

Fries, H., Aspects of the Church, tr. T. O'Meara, Westminster, Md. 1966.

Grasso, D., S.J., È Possiblile l'Unione Delle Chiese, Milano 1960.

Hamer, J., O.P., The Church Is A Communion, tr. R. Matthews, New York 1964.

Hanahoe, E., S.A., One Fold, Garrison, New York 1959.

Hardon, J. A., S.J., Christianity in Conflict--A Catholic View of Protestantism, Westminster, Md., 1959.

d'Herbigny, M., Theologica de Ecclesia, Paris 1920.

Jaeger, L., The Ecumenical Council, The Churches and Christendom, tr. A. V. Littledale, New York 1961.

_____, A Stand on Ecumenism: The Council's Decree, tr. H. Graef, New York 1965.

Jaki, S., Les Tendances Nouvelles De L'Ecclesiologie, Rome 1957.

Journet, C., L'Église du Verbe Incarné, 2 vols.

_____, Théologie de l'Église, Bruges 1958.

Karrer, O., Um Die Einheit Der Christen, Frankfurt 1953.

_____, The Kingdom of God Today, tr. M. R. Ockenden, New York 1964.

King, J., O.MI., The Necessity of the Church for Salvation in Selected Theological Writings of the Past Century (Studies in Sacred Theology 2nd Ser. 115) Washington, D. C. 1960.

Koster, M., Ekklesiologie im Werden, Paderborn 1940.

Lamarque, A., Vers l'Unité? Catholiques et Protestants, Paris 1963.

LeClercq, J., La Rencontre des Églises, Tournai 1962.

Leeming, B., S.J., The Vatican Council and Christian Unity, New York 1966.

_____, The Churches And The Church, Westminster, Md. 1961.

LeGuillou, M. J., O.P., Mission et Unité, 2 vols. Paris 1960.

_____, Le Christ et L'Église, Paris 1963.

McNamara, K., Christian Unity, Maynooth 1962.

Mersch, E., The Theology of the Mystical Body, tr. C. Vollert, St. Louis 1951.

Miller, S., et al., ed., Ecumenical Dialogue at Harvard, Cambridge, Mass. 1964.

Moehler, J., Die Einheit in der Kirche, Cologne 1957.

_____, Symbolik, Cologne 1958.

Mura, E., Le Corps Mystique du Christ, 2ed. Paris 1937.

Obrien, J. A., Steps to Christian Unity, New York 1964.

Passaglia, C., De Ecclesia Christi, Ratisbone 1853.

Rahner, K., S.J., Theological Investigations 2., tr. K. Kruger, Baltimore 1963.

Ratzinger, J., Volk und Haus Gottes in Augustins Lehre von der Kirche, Munich 1954.

Sartory, T., O.S.B., The Ecumenical Movement and the Unity of the Church, tr. H. Graef, Westminster, Md. 1963.

Schauf, H., Die Ekklesiologie des Konzilstheologen Clemens Schrader, S.J., Freiburg 1959.

Scheeben, M., The Mysteries of Christianity, tr. C. Vollert, St. Louis 1946.

Schmaus, M., Katholische Dogmatik 3. Munich 1958.

Sherwood, P., O.S.B., ed., The Unity of the Churches of God, Baltimore 1962.

St. John, H., O.P., The Church and Christian Unity, London 1964.

_____, ed., Essays in Christian Unity, Westminster, Md. 1955.

Tavard, G., Two Centuries of Ecumenism, tr. R. Hughes, New York 1962.

_____, Understanding Protestantism, tr. R. Attwater, Glen Rock 1964.

Thils, G., Le Décret sur l'oecuménisme du deuxième Concile du Vatican, Paris 1966.

_____, Histoire Doctrinale Du Mouvement Oecuménique, 2 ed. Louvain 1963.

_____, La "Théologie Oecuménique", Louvain 1960.

_____, "Orientations de la Théologie", Louvain 1958.

_____, Les notes de l'église dans l'apologétique catholique depuis la réforme, Gembloux 1937.

Todd, J., Catholicism and the Ecumenical Movement, New York 1957.

Tromp, S., S.J., Corpus Christi Quod Est Ecclesia, Rome 1937.

_____, De Christo Capite Mystici Corporis, Rome 1960.

_____, De Spiritu Christi Anima, Rome 1960.

Valeske, U., Votum Ecclesiae: Das Ringen um die Kirche in der neueren romisch-katholischen Theologie, Munchen 1962.

Vischer, L., ed., A Documentary History Of The Faith And Order Movement 1927-1963, St. Louis 1963.

Zapelena, T., S.J., De Ecclesia Christi 2 vols. Rome 1950.

Periodicals

Algermissen, K., "Aktuelle Mitgliedschaft in der Kirche und gnadenhafte Zugehorigheit zu ihr," TG 46 (1956) 260-75.

Aubert, R., "L'evolution des tendances oecuméniques dans l'Église romaine depuis l'ouverture du concile," Irenikon 37 (1964) 355-75.

Baum, G., O.S.A., "The Ecclesial Reality of the Other Churches," Concilium, 4 (1965) 34-46.

_____, "Ecumenism and Renewal," JES 1 (1964) 105-7.

Bea, A., "Problemes Théologiques et Pratiques de l'Unité," DC 1347 (1961) 301-06.

_____, "Il Cattolico di fronte al problema dell'unione dei cristiani," CC 112 (1961) 113-29.

_____, "Problemas y Caminos de la Unidad de los Cristianos," Lumen 10 (1961) 68-82.

_____, "The Decree on Ecumenism," Month 33 (1965) 145-56 and 34 (1965) 15-27.

Backes, I., "Die Kirche ist das Volk Gottes im Neuen Bund," TZ 69 (1960) 111-17.

Beaupere, R., "Requetes de l'oecuménisme," LV 50 (1960) 95-120.

Beumer, J., S.J., "The Identity of the Mystical Body and the Catholic Church," TD 4 (1956) 53-8.

Bouyer, L., "Où en est la théologie du Corps mystique?" RSR 22 (1948) 313-33.

Boyer, C., S.J., "Commentary on Decree on Ecumenism," Unitas 16 (1964) 243-53.

_____, "Vestigia Ecclesiae," Unitas 8 (1956) 67-70.

_____, "The Instruction on the 'Ecumenical Movement'," Unitas 2 (1950) 3-5.

Brunet, R., "Les dissidents de bonne foi sont-ils membres de l'Église?" AG 68 (1954) 199-218.

Chavasse, A., "Ordonnes Au Corps Mystique. . ." NRT 70 (1948) 690-702.

Clark, F., S.J., "Trends in Ecumenical Ecclesiology," HJ 4 (1963) 25-31, 264-72.

Congar, Y., O.P., "The Church: The People of God," Concilium 1 (1965) 7-16.

_____, "The Council in the Age of Dialogue," CrC 12 (1962) 144-51.

_____, "The Council, The Church, And The Others," CrC 11 (1961) 241-54.

Congar, Y., O.P., "Les etapes du dialogue oecuménique," Evangeliser 16 (1962) 345-61.

_____, "Notes sur les mots 'Congession, Église et Communion'," Irenikon 23 (1950) 3-36.

_____, "La Signification Oecuménique de l'oeuvre de Moehler," Irenikon 15 (1938) 113-30.

_____, "Comment L'Église Sainte doit se Renouveler sans cesse," Irenikon 34 (1961) 322-45.

_____, "Les ruptures de l'Unité," Istina 10 (1964) 133-78.

_____, "Holy Church," Perspectives 7 (1962) 104-106.

_____, "Dogmes Protestant et Dogme Catholique Compares," RSPT 21 (1937) 499-504.

_____, "Au sujet du salut des non-Catholiques," RSR 32 (1958) 53-65.

_____, "Progress of the Ecumenical Dialogue," TD 11 (1963) 67-72.

_____, "A propos des vestigia Ecclesiae," VUC 39 (1952) 4-5.

Coyne, J. J., "The Mystical Body and the Ecumenical Movement," CR 42 (1957) 343-55.

Dacquino, P., "De membris Ecclesiae, quae est Corpus Christi," VD 41 (1963) 117-39.

Davis, C., "A Modern Reformation," CR 46 (1961) 577-83.

_____, "Faith and Dissident Christians," CR 44 (1959) 214-7.

_____, "Past Trends and Present Tensions," CR 48 (1963) 417-36.

Dalmais, I., O.P., "The Reunion of the Churches," IER 96 (1961) 207-10.

DeBovis, "La fondation de l'Église," NRT 85 (1963) 113-38.

Dumont, C., O.P., "The Council and Christian Unity," Unitas 11 (1959) 37-45.

_____, "Vestigia Ecclesiae," VUC 32 (1951) 6-7.

Extremeno, C., "La Necessidad de la iglesia para salvarse," Studium 3 (1963) 31-86.

Fenton, J. C., "The Holy Office Letter on the Necessity of the Catholic Church," AER 127 (1952) 450-61.

_____, "Membership In The Church," AER 112 (1945) 287-305.

_____, "The Meaning of the Church's Necessity for Salvation," AER 124 (1951) 124-43, 203-21, 290-302.

_____, "On Membership in Church," AER 145 (1961) 39-57.

Fries, H., "Der Ekklesiologische Status der evangelishen Kirche in Katholischer Sicht," TZ 13 (1962) 85-98. Eng. tr. "The Ecclesiological Status of the Protestant Churches From A Catholic Viewpoint," JES 1 (1964) 195-212.

Gribomont, J., O.S.B., "Du Sacrament de l'Église et des ses realisations imparfaites," Irenikon 22 (1949) 345-67.

Groot, J., "The World Council of Churches and Christian Unity," Concilium 4 (1965) 87-92.

Grosche, R. "Vom Bau der Kirche," Hochland 40 (1947-48) 273-98.

Hale, I., "Christian Unity," DR 76 (1958) 364-77.

Hamell, P. J., "Membership of the Mystical Body," IER 89 (1958) 393-411.

_____, "Christian Reunion," IER 91 (1959) 179-86.

Hamer, J., O.P., "The Mission of Catholic Ecumenism," CrC 6 (1956) 131-40.

_____, "Les Églises Protestants dans la Perspective Oecuménique," Evangeliser 15 (1960) 251-65.

_____, "La Dilemme Chrétien," RN 14 (1956) 233-49.

_____, "Le Baptême et L'Église. A propos des 'vestigia ecclesiae'," Irenikon 25 (1952) 142-64, 263-75.

_____, "Ecumenical Council and Unity," IER 94 (1960) 1-11.

_____, "L'Ecclesiologia Oggi," Sapienza 17 (1964) 11-8.

Hanahoe, E., S.A., "Ecclesiology and Ecumenism," AER 147 (1962) 226-42, 319-37.

Hay, C., O.F.M., "The Ecclesiological Significance of the Decree on Ecumenism," JES 3 (1966) 343-53.

Hunt, R., "The Separated Christian Churches And Communities In The Mystery Of Salvation," The Catholic Theological Society of America 21 (1966) 21-35.

Journet, C., "Who Are Members of the Church?" TD 10 (1962) 179-83.

Kasper, W., "Der Ekklesiologische Charakter Der Nichkatholischen Kirchen," TQ 145 (1965) 42-62.

Lamirande, E., O.M.I., "La signification ecclesiologique des communautes dissidentes et la doctrine des 'Vestigia Ecclesiae'," Istina 10 (1964) 25-58.

_____, "Solidarite interne et Oecuménisme Congres anglican de Toronto 1963," Irenikon 36 (1963) 476-506.

Le Guillou, M. J., O.P., "Interrogations sur l'avenir de l'oecuménisme," Istina 10 (1964) 7-24.

_____, "Plentitude de Catholicite et Oecuménisme," Istina 6 (1959) 261-78.

_____, "Mission et Unité," Istina 6 (1959) 433-58.

_____, "L'Église et Communion," Istina 6 (1959) 33-82.

_____, "L'Église Catholique et Les Divisions," Istina 5 (1958) 161-82.

_____, "Des Controverses au dialogue Oecuménique," Istina 5 (1958) 65-112.

Leeming, B., S.J., "Ecumenical Conclusions: Doctrine," HJ 2 (1961) 129-41.

Lialine, C., "Une Etape en ecclesiologie. Reflexions sur l'Encyclique Mystici Corporis," Irenikon 19 (1946) 129-52.

Liege, P., "Le Salut des Autres," LV (1954) 13-41.

McNamara, K., "The Ecclesiological Movement in Germany in the Twentieth Century," IER 102 (1964) 345-58.

_____, "Theology of Christian Unity," ITQ 28 (1961) 255-78.

_____, "Vatican II: Decree on Ecumenism," ITQ 32 (1965) 129-56.

_____, "The Idea of the Church: Modern Developments In Ecclesiology," ITQ 33 (1966) 99-113.

Martelet, G., "Chrétiens Séparés: Point de vue Catholique," LV 40 (1958) 19-43.

Morel, V., "Le Corps Mystique et l'Église catholique romaine," NRT 70 (1948) 703-26.

Morsdorf, K., "Die Kirchengliedschaft im Lichte der kirchlichen Rechtsordnung," TG 1 (1944) 115-31.

Nothomb, D., P.B., "L'Église et le Corps mystique du Christ," Irenikon 25 (1952) 226-48.

Outler, A. C., "From Disputation to Dialogue," The Ecumenical Review 16 (1963) 14-27.

Ratzinger, J., "The Ministerial Office and the Unity of the Church," JES 1 (1964) 42-57.

_____, "Die Kirche und die Kirchen," Reformatio 13 (1964) 85-108.

Richard, L., "Une these fondamental de l'oecuménisme: Baptême, incorporation Visible a l'Église," NRT 74 (1952) 485-92.

Riga, P., S.J., "The Ecclesiology of Johann Adam Moehler," TS 22 (1961) 563-87.

Rouquette, R., "Le Concile et Les Églises non Catholique," Etudes 312-13, (1962) 397-99.

Santoro, G., "La Natura Delle Note Vera Chiesa," Sapienza 6 (1953) 257-71, 384-402.

Sartory, T., O.S.B., "The Contemporary Ecumenical Movement," ABR 10 (1959) 1-19.

Sartory, T., O.S.B., "The Council and Ecumenical Concern," CrC 12 (1962) 397-406.

_____, "L'esprit de l'oecuménisme en Allemagne," Istina 7 (1960) 17-36.

_____, "Reunion of Christians Despite Catholic Dogmas?" JES 1 (1964) 82-98.

_____, "Divided Christians and the Eucharist," TD 11 (1963) 73-8.

Shaut, A., O.S.B., "Die Kirche als Volk Gottes," BM 25 (1949) 195-208.

Stiernon, D., "Economie Ecclesiastique et Intercommunion," ETL 34 (1958) 869-72.

Strotmann, D., "Les Membres de L'Église," Irenikon 25 (1952) 249-62.

Sullivan, F., S.J., "De unitate Ecclesiae: Doctrina Catolica et doctrina quae pravalet in Concilio Mundiali ecclesiarum," AG 43 (1962) 510-26.

Tavard, G., "Catholicity and Non-Catholic Christians," DR 77 (1959) 205-16.

Thils, G., "Chrétiens Séparés et 'éléments' d'Église," CM 47 (1962) 466-77.

_____, "Pour mieux comprendre les Manifestations oecuménique," NRT 84 (1962) 3-16.

_____, "Le Décret Conciliaire sur l'Oecuménisme," NRT 87 (1965) 225-44.

Todd, J., "Vanishing Divisions," DR 75 (1957) 24-37.

Tromp, S., S.J., "De Ecclesiae Membris," Divinitas 6 (1962) 481-92.

van Beeck, F., S.J., "Towards An Ecumenical Understanding Of The Sacraments," JES 3 (1966) 57-112.

Walker, F., "Vestigia Ecclesiae," At-One-Ment 4 (1962) 130-9.

Weigel, G., S.J., "Theological Reflections on Ecumenism," TD 7 (1959) 82-7.

Willems, B., O.P., "Who Belongs to the Church?" Concilium 1 (1965) 62-71.

Witte, J., S.J., "Die Katholizitat der Kirche," AG 42 (1961) 193-241.